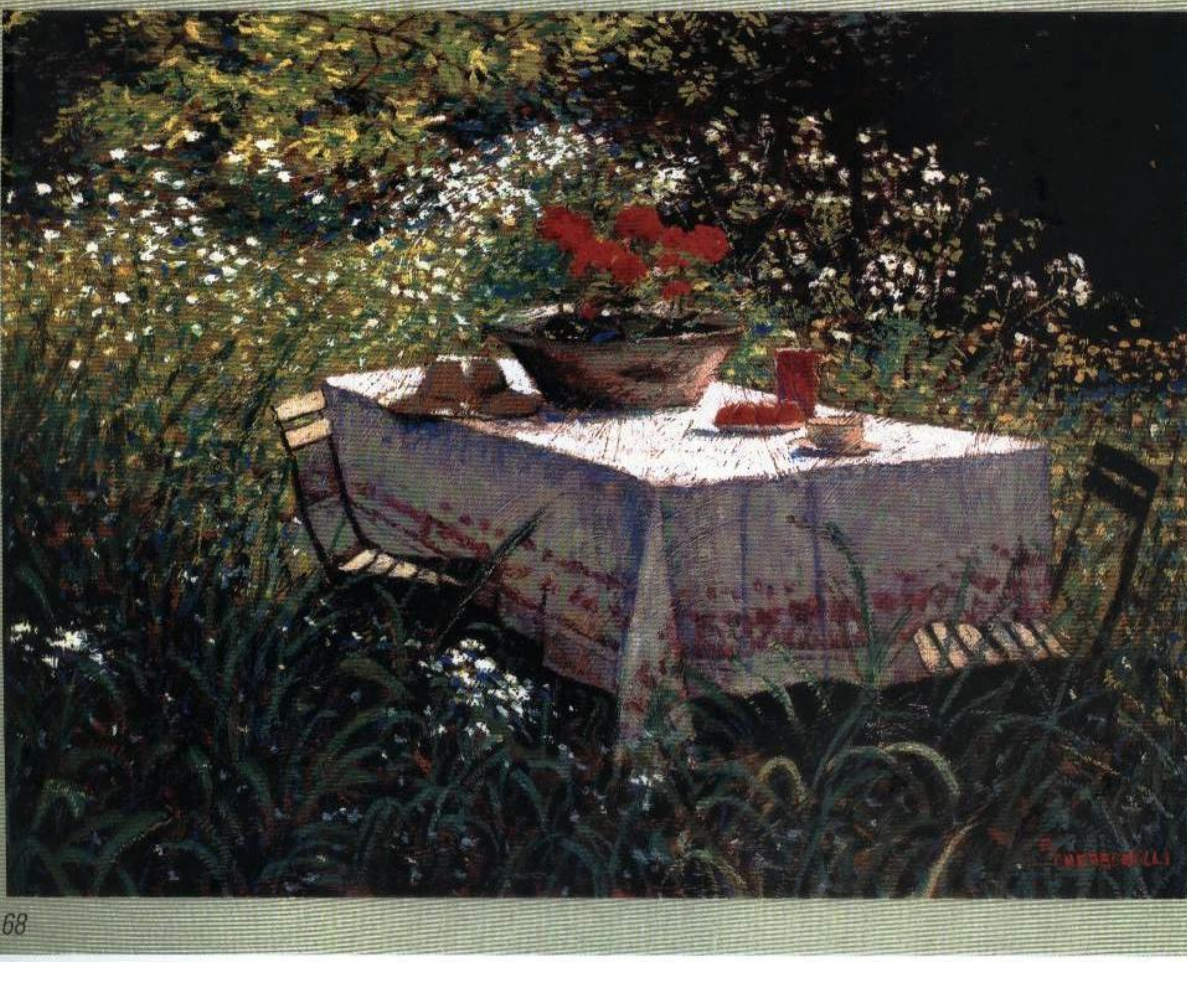


Impossível falar de Raquel Taraborelli sem mencionar Claude Monet – referência desta sensível artista plástica brasileira que, desde 1975, se dedica de corpo e alma à pintura. Assim como o mestre impressionista, ela é apaixonada pelos elementos da natureza – especialmente as flores, que são transportadas para a tela com tal riqueza e harmonia de contrastes que podemos observá-las durante horas sem cair na monotonia. As pitadas de cores vibrantes associadas à delicadeza dos tons pastel trazem alegria ao cenário, mantendo o clima de paz. O resultado é uma deliciosa sensação de estarmos dentro da cena sentindo o frescor da brisa, o calor do sol e o perfume de lavanda, rosa, gerânio, jasmim... Todas as manhãs, antes de começar a organizar seus pincéis e tintas, ela repete um ritual sagrado: passeia pelos jardins que abraçam sua casa-ateliê, no interior de São Paulo, para "sentir" as folhas, as flores e o céu. "Tento perceber cada detalhe: as formas, as texturas e as tonalidades que surgem com a mudança de luz e sombra", conta. Só então cria a paleta de cores e começa a trabalhar a tela já preparada com camadas espessas de tinta. As pinceladas fragmentadas, de perto, parecem traços, pontos e vírgulas. Mas quando, quando nos distanciamos, a magia dessa técnica emprestada dos pintores impressionistas é revelada: os detalhes se fundem, surgindo imagens com volume e vibração. Mas é a luminosidade que Raquel alcançou na sua pintura que mais encanta o público – do Brasil e de outros países. E, assim, os campos e jardins desta artista vão deixando o mundo mais alegre e florido.





# The world in flowers



*"A pintura me proporciona uma deliciosa sensação de liberdade*
*Passo horas diante da tela, entregue a uma viagem cheia de emoções."*



Fields and gardens filled with roses, irises, azaleas, poppies by Raquel Taraborelli reveal her immense passion for nature and Impressionist art. Her canvasses are particularly colorful and luminous, conveying a sense of joy and peace that touches our souls deeply.



Os campos, caminhos e jardins de rosas, dálias, íris, azaléias, papoulas... de Raquel Taraborelli revelam sua imensa paixão pela natureza e pelos mestres impressionistas. Especialmente coloridas e iluminadas, suas telas ainda transmitem alegria e paz. E tocam fundo nossa alma.

**por / by Eliane Mesquita**

fotos / photos Sérgio Guerine



A chef do Carême, no Rio, criou o medalhão de atum com tangerina

# Leveza irresistível

## O quente, o fresco e o doce num só prato. Assim é a alquimia regida por Flávia Quaresma, criada especialmente para *OffShore*, e perfeita para fazer no barco ou na praia

**POR** DÉCIO COSTA
**FOTOS** MARCELO CORREA

Com execeção de uma ou outra ida à praia, ela não têm nenhuma relação com o mar – é bom avisar logo. But who cares? Quem já foi ao badalado restaurante Carême Bistrô, no Rio, sabe que das mãos dessa jovem chef de cozinha saem aromas e combinações dignos de deuses. Admirada por medalhões da boa cozinha, Flávia Quaresma é conhecida principalmente pela sua criatividade. E criar, aliás, foi o que ela fez quando entramos em contato. Desenvolveu, especialmente para *OffShore*, uma tentação pensando em quem está no mar ou bem perto dele: medalhões de atum com salada verde, tangerina e redução de balsâmico com menta. "É fácil e rápido de fazer. Assim, se ganha tempo para curtir os amigos", defende. Ou ganhá-los de uma vez por todas. Basta dar uma única garfada e a gente percebe a mágica da alquimia. Ela combina a suavidade do atum, a leveza da salada com o agridoce da tangerina. O resultado é um prato de personalidade, com um toque oriental, graças ao sabor adocicado da fruta. Como ela o criou? "Estava na feira não resisti à beleza da tangerina", revela.

Puro talento de quem nunca imaginou ser chef de cozinha. Sua relação gastronômica começou com jantares em restaurante bacanas que ela pedia como presente de aniversário. Anos mais tarde, se mandou para a França e lá matriculou-se na *Le Cordon Bleu*, a mais conceituada escola de cozinha do mundo. Voltou três anos depois e, a fim de abrir um restaurante, cozinhava para festas, muitas delas em barcos. Em 1999, fundou o Carême Bistrô. E não precisou de muito tempo para levar os prêmios de "melhor restaurante do ano" e "restaurante revelação", pelas revistas *Gula e Veja Rio.*

Agora, incluiu os medalhões de atum no seu menu, pelos próximos três meses. Se preferir, pode conferir o prato lá. Ou vestir o avental – basta seguir a receita. ■

## COMO FAZER

(receita para 4 pessoas)

**Ingredientes**

4 peças de atum de cerca de 210g • 2 tangerinas poncã • 1 maço de rúcula • 1 maço de almeirão • 1 maço de alfaces crespa verde • 1/4 do maço de coentros • 160 ml de azeite extra virgem • 2 limões • 50g de avelã descascada, assada e quebrada • sal e pimenta a gosto • 1 l vinho tinto • 250 ml vinagre balsâmico • 200 ml de vinagre tinto • 50 ml de vinagre de framboesa • 5 grãos de zimbro • 50 g de açúcar • 1 maço de hortelã

**Preparo**

1 Coloque numa panela o vinho tinto, os vinagres, o açúcar e o zimbro. Abaixe o fogo ao ferver. Quando a mistura adquirir uma consistência leve de xarope, retire do fog[o] Adicionar as folhas de menta e tamp[e] imediatamente a panela para que seja be[m] feita a infusão. Reser[ve]

2 Esquente muito bem uma frigideira [ou] chapa. Frite rapidamente todos os lado[s] [de] cada peça de atum. Deixe descan[sar]

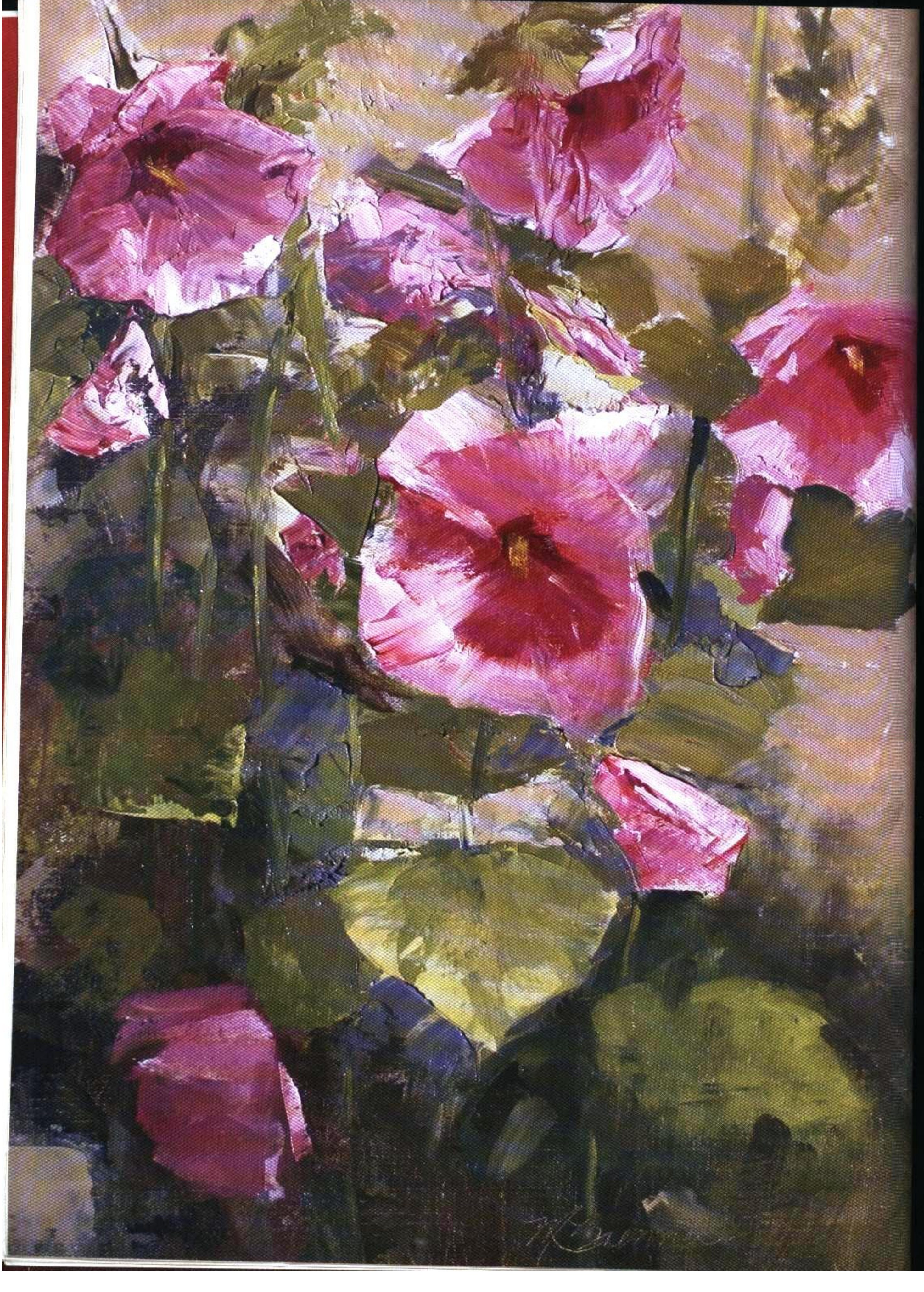
3 Desfolhe a rúcula, o almeirão e a alf[ace] Limpe bem os gomos de tange[rina] retirando as peles e as semen[tes]

4 Numa travessa tempere as folhas [com] azeite, suco de limão, sal e pim[enta] Acrescente o hortelã e o coe[ntro]

5 Corte as 4 peças de atum em medal[hões] Tempere com sal e leve rapidamente ao f[orno]

**Arrumação do p[rato]**

Disponha três medalhões por p[rato] acrescente a salada com as ervas, adici[one] tangerina e as avelãs. Finalize coloca[ndo a] redução de balsâmico com menta em



## Before You Paint, Capture the Energy of Landscapes With

# Value Drawings



OPPOSITE PAGE
**Hollyhocks**
2006, oil, 16 x 12.
All artwork this article collection the artist.

ABOVE
The preliminary sketch for *Hollyhocks*.

Preliminary graphite and ink drawings help **Marla J. Brenner** find the important rhythms, contours, textures, and compositional patterns she wants to emphasize in her plein air oil paintings. | **by M. Stephen Doherty**

None of us really wants to take time making preliminary sketches and color studies when we've hiked to a spot where the sunlight reveals a magnificent plot of land, our palettes are loaded with paint, and our brushes are in hand. We want to paint—not draw! But Wisconsin artist Marla J. Brenner asks us to look at the canvases we finished yesterday and consider whether they wouldn't be better if we had taken 10 or 15 minutes to first study the flowing shapes, the focal point, the repeated colors, the harmonious color relationships, and the energy that attracted us to the location.

Brenner asks such questions of herself and her graphic-design students at Madison Area Technical College, in Madison, Wisconsin, because laying out a page with type, images, and color tints is similar to creating an image with oil paints on canvas. "I studied design in college and understand how it applies to print and electronic media. But when I began taking workshops with Ned Jacob 16 years ago, I realized design informs painting just as it does the commercial arts," she explains. "It's all about directing the viewer's attention to your message, whether it's 'buy this product' or 'look at what I observed in nature at one moment in time.'

"I learned the hard way that if I skip the preparatory work of looking, sketching, and planning, I will pay for my impatience later on," Brenner says, repeating her advice about making compositional sketches. "Ten or 15 minutes making a 4"-x-5" sketch with graphite or ink gives me enough information to get started. Anything more involved would spoil the spontaneity of the painting process. The important thing is to analyze what one is seeing—

TOP
**West Fork at Avalanche**
2006, oil, 11 x 14.

MIDDLE LEFT
The preliminary sketch for *West Fork at Avalanche.*

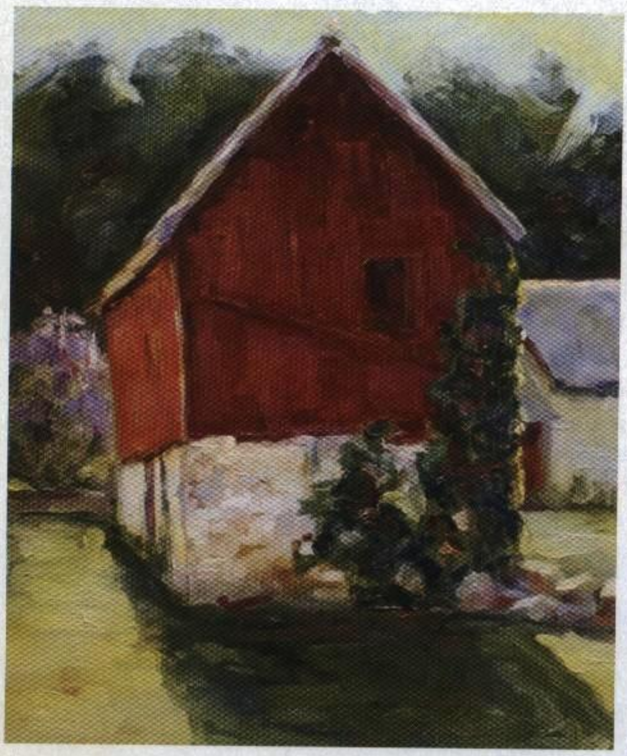
MIDDLE RIGHT
The preliminary sketch for *Red Barn.*

BOTTOM
**Red Barn**
2006, oil, 12 x 10.









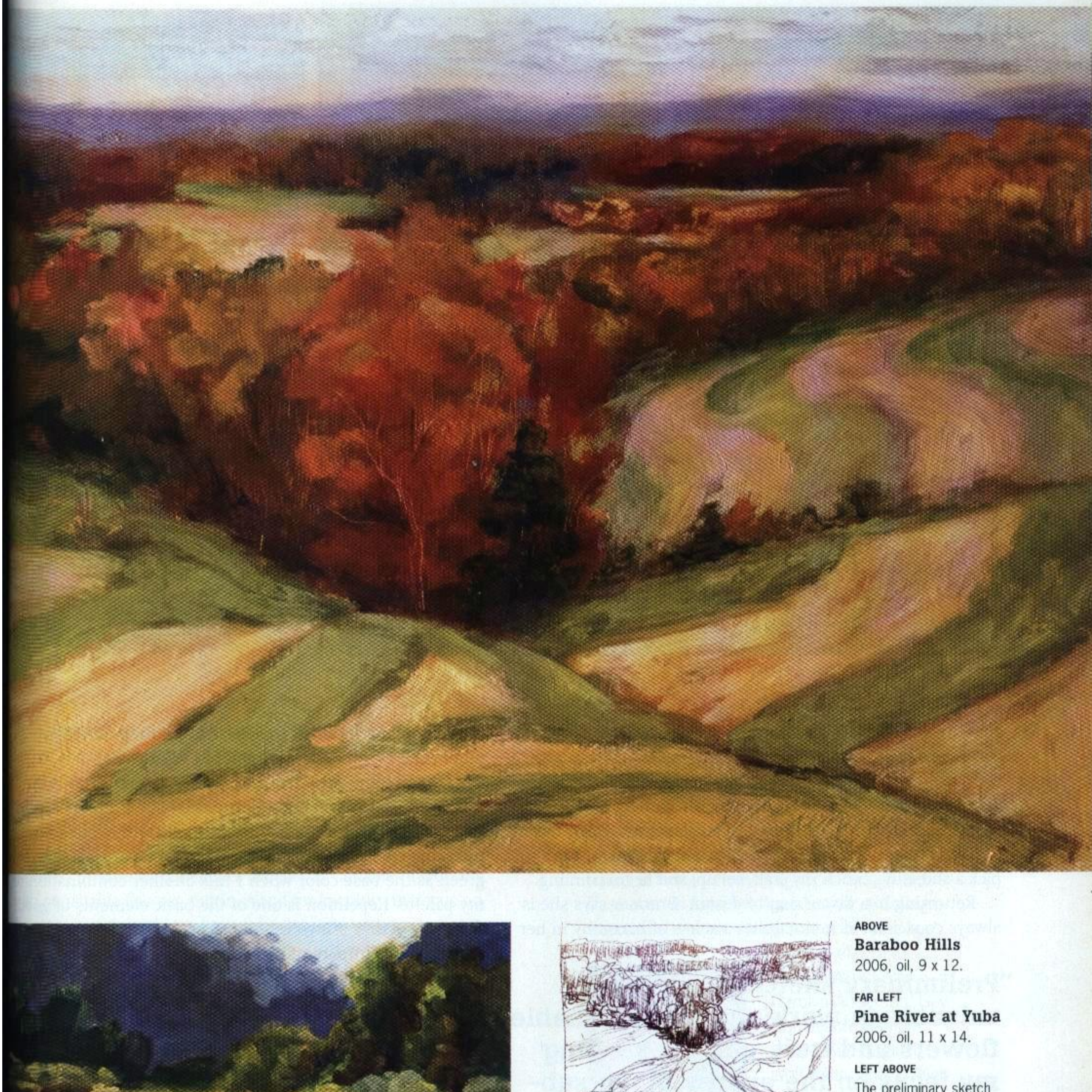
what one hopes to communicate to viewers. That may be the pattern of bright sunlight and dark shadow, the progression of a stream into the distance, the curving shape of the trees, or the organization of shapes within a field of vision.

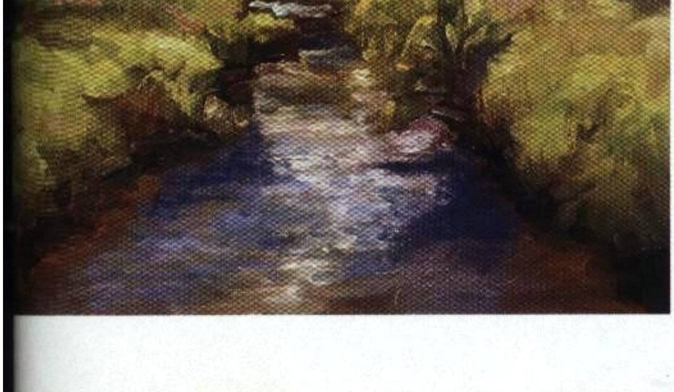
Brenner makes preparatory drawings whether she works on-location or in her studio. She also follows the same procedures for starting a painting in either location. Keeping the quick sketch close at hand, she redraws the lines of the preliminary study on Belgian-linen canvas mounted on Gatorboard. The lines are made with thin mixtures of the local colors—green for the grasses, blue for the sky, and so on. In contrast to what other artists often do, she rarely uses earth colors. "In recent months I've been experimenting with colors for toning the surface of the linen because I like the harmonizing effect on the painting, but my preference is still for local colors on a pure white surface," Brenner explains.

**"I learned the hard way that if I skip the preparatory work of looking, sketching, and planning, I will pay for my impatience later on."**

"I only redraw a few of the important lines in the sketch. I stand back and extend my arm as I paint long, flowing lines on the canvas to capture the energy of the scene," she says. "Then I block in middle values, working from the top of the canvas to the bottom and from the background to the foreground. When painting outdoors, I use a limited selection of colors to reduce the weight I have to haul around and to simplify the painting process. My standard palette includes ultramarine blue deep, alizarin crimson, cadmium orange, cadmium yellow light, and titanium white. On recommendations from other artists, I recently added transparent red oxide, manganese blue, mineral violet, terra verte Verona, and a very small amount of viridian. I don't use a painting medium except the odorless mineral spirits with which I thin the paint for the initial block-in. Vegetable oil makes a great brush cleaner; it leaves my brushes clean, soft, and pliable."

When painting en plein air in oil, Brenner works with her panels placed on the shelf of a half-French easel or an Open Box M pochade box. She transports her wet paintings either in the lid of the pochade box or in one of several slot boxes made by friend and fellow painter Douglas Smith. On the occasions when she wants to paint while traveling along the waterways of Wisconsin and Northwest Ontario in a kayak, she










ABOVE
**Baraboo Hills**
2006, oil, 9 x 12.

FAR LEFT
**Pine River at Yuba**
2006, oil, 11 x 14.

LEFT ABOVE
The preliminary sketch for *Baraboo Hills*.

LEFT BELOW
The preliminary sketch for *Pine River at Yuba*.

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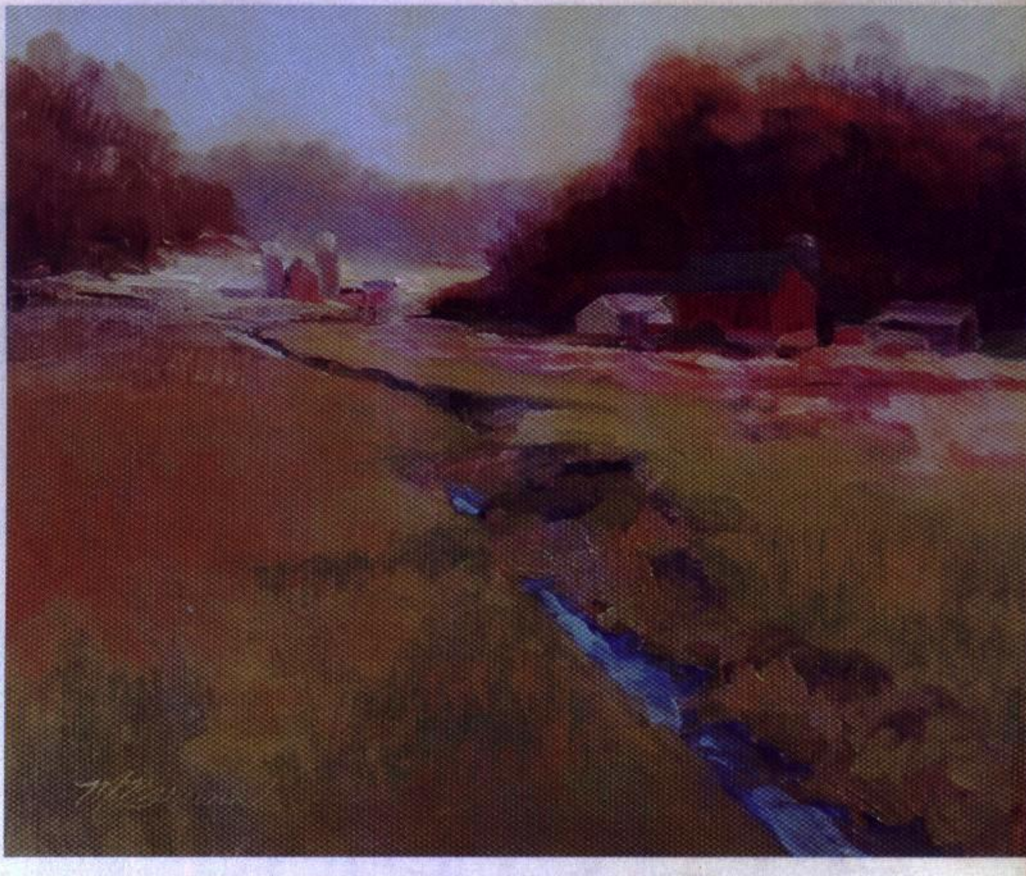
*View an Online Exclusive gallery of work by Marla J. Brenner on the* American Artist *website.*

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT
**Japanese Figurine With Flower, Apples, and Ornaments**
2006, oil, 14 x 14.

OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT
Preliminary sketches for *Japanese Figurine With Flower, Apples, and Ornaments.*

RIGHT
**Morning on Spring Valley Road**
2006, oil, 10 x 12.

BELOW
The preliminary sketch for *Morning on Spring Valley Road.*





Landscape is not the only subject that Brenner finds interesting; she spends some of the winter developing still lifes using similar techniques and materials. "I'm a hardy individual and I enjoy going outside in the winter to paint snow scenes, but the weather in Wisconsin can get rather brutal, so I often work on still lifes during the dead of winter," she explains. "Preliminary sketches are just as valuable in working with perishable flowers and fruit and for keeping my focus on the energy of the subject during the painting process."

Brenner is always looking ahead to further growth and professional activity as an artist. She has identified a number of challenges she wants to pursue in the future. "I admire the way painters Mark Daily and Clyde Aspevig are able to maintain freshness when using their plein air paintings as the basis of large studio paintings. I want to translate more of my small oil and watercolor sketches into studio pictures," Brenner says. "I'm also interested in the idea of developing several series of paintings that focus on one location or subject. There is never enough time, however, to pursue all the plans one has for painting, and I have ambivalent feelings about set plans to address certain subject matter. It's amazing how much one can accomplish by living in the moment, giving oneself over to whimsy, and working one painting at a time. It's the spontaneity of the moment that keeps me motivated to paint. Perhaps that's true for all of us." ■

*M. Stephen Doherty is the editor-in-chief of* American Artist.

## About the Artist

**Marla J. Brenner** received a Bachelor of Science degree in art education from the University of Wisconsin, in Madison, and she pursued further study in graphic design and illustration at Madison Area Technical College, where she is currently an instructor. She has studied with Ned Jacob, Mark Daily, Carolyn Anderson, Guy Coheleach, Ramon Kelley, Kim English, Wolf Kahn, and T. Allen Lawson. Her paintings have been included in exhibitions at the Wright Museum of Art, at Beloit College, in Beloit; the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters, in Madison; the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, in Racine; and Milward Farrell Fine Art, in Madison, all in Wisconsin. For more information on Brenner, visit her website: www.MarlaBrenner.com.



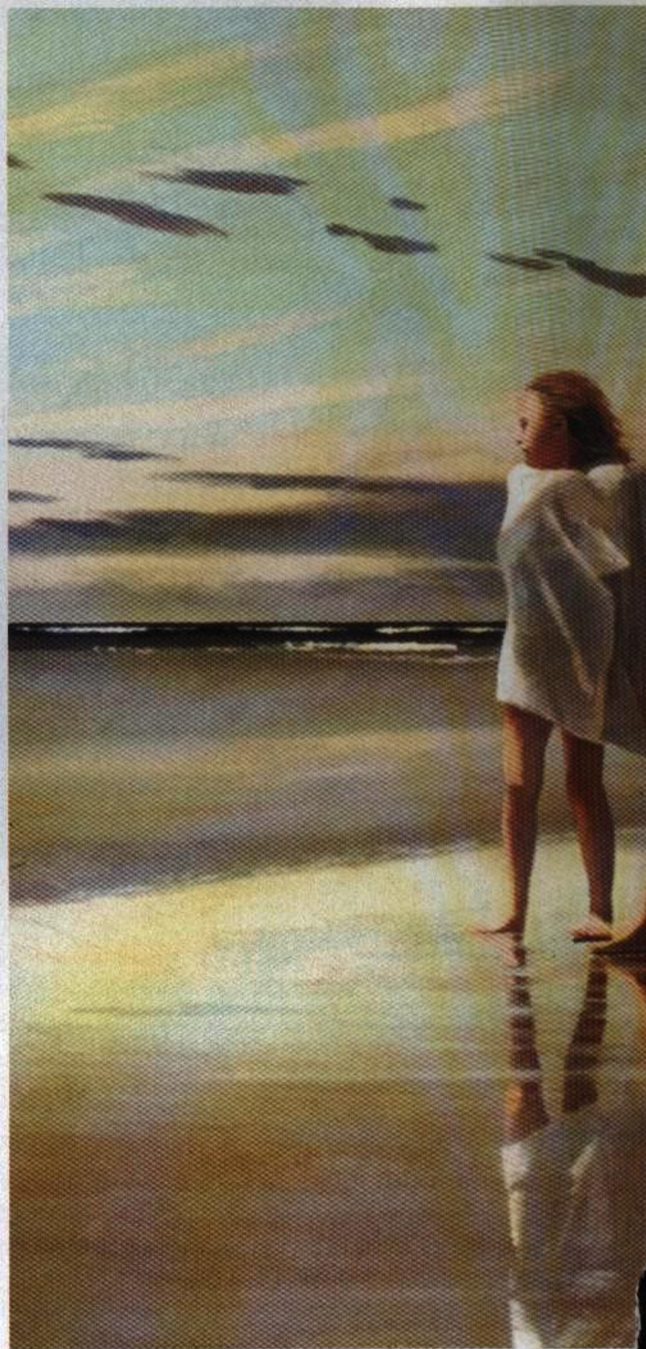
# David Ahlsted:

## Simplicity and Life

This New Jersey painter renders the world with geometric lucidity and brilliant color.

—

**by John A. Parks**



DAVID AHLSTED paints large pictures with bewitching clarity. Children playing on wide sandy beaches, still lifes of mouth-watering fruit, and panoramic views of harbors are all rendered as powerfully simplified forms. A stark and lucid geometry makes its presence felt in these paintings, an organization of almost mathematical conviction. In *Shark Warning*, for instance, several bathers wait anxiously on a beach, staring out to sea. At first glance, the scene appears to be straightforward realism but, upon closer examination, the sheer evenness of the intervals in the grouping of the figures reveals a careful design. Moreover, the forms of the bathers themselves have obviously been greatly simplified: Bathing suits and hair have been rendered in a highly reductive manner, and legs, arms, and torsos have been reduced to almost tubular forms. A similar strategy has been followed in *Casaba Melon*, in which two melons, a lily, and a glass of water sit on a mirrored surface above a decorative plinth. The elements have been carefully organized into an elegant still life, highlighting the composition's reflected curves and balanced weights. Any extraneous descriptive information has been left out, and the viewer experiences both recognition and revelation, suddenly seeing familiar objects with unexpected clarity.



ABOVE
**Shark Warning**
2006, oil on linen,
48 x 82. Collection
the artist.

If forms are simplified in Ahlsted's work, then colors are amplified. In *Blueberry Pie,* for instance, the pinks of the candied apples and the rich violets of the blueberry filling are pitched at an intensity well beyond reality. Likewise, in *Orange Blossom Special* the peaches, apples, pears, and flowers are painted with almost dizzying color saturation. It's as though the artist, having reduced the visual world to its barest essentials, has proceeded to dress it up again into something quite dazzling and extraordinary. Even in his bathing pictures, he makes flesh, sea, and sand glow with a saturated palette.

Ahlsted traces his artistic interests back to the Saturday-morning classes to which his parents took him in



**Step 1**
The artist first painted the beach and sea setting before adding a group of figures from various photographic sources. He initially outlined these figures in burnt sienna.



**Step 2**
Ahlsted then painted all areas that would show exposed skin a flat burnt sienna. He left the areas of the bathing suits empty.



**Step 3**
The artist developed the background and softened some of the figures' edges next. He also began to add darker tones to some of the flesh areas.



**Step 4 (left)**
Each figure was worked up individually. The red of the sienna glows through the top layer of paint, contributing greatly to the effect of brilliant daylight.





**Step 5 (above left and above)**
As the painting neared completion, only a few figures remained unpainted. In the figures that have been painted, the artist let some of the underlying burnt sienna show through—for instance, along the spine of the woman in the center of the composition.



**Step 6 (left)**
The artist adjusted the values throughout the painting as well as softened edges so that the whole composition read consistently. The painting is both a fully believable scene and an elegant two-dimensional design of figures against a background.

THE COMPLETED PAINTING:
**Long Beach Island**
2006, oil on linen, 48 x 60.
Collection the artist.

BELOW

**Hazy Morning**

2006, oil, 48 x 60.
Collection the artist.



artist's paintings, therefore, are completely reconstructed versions of the world, projecting a reality all their own.

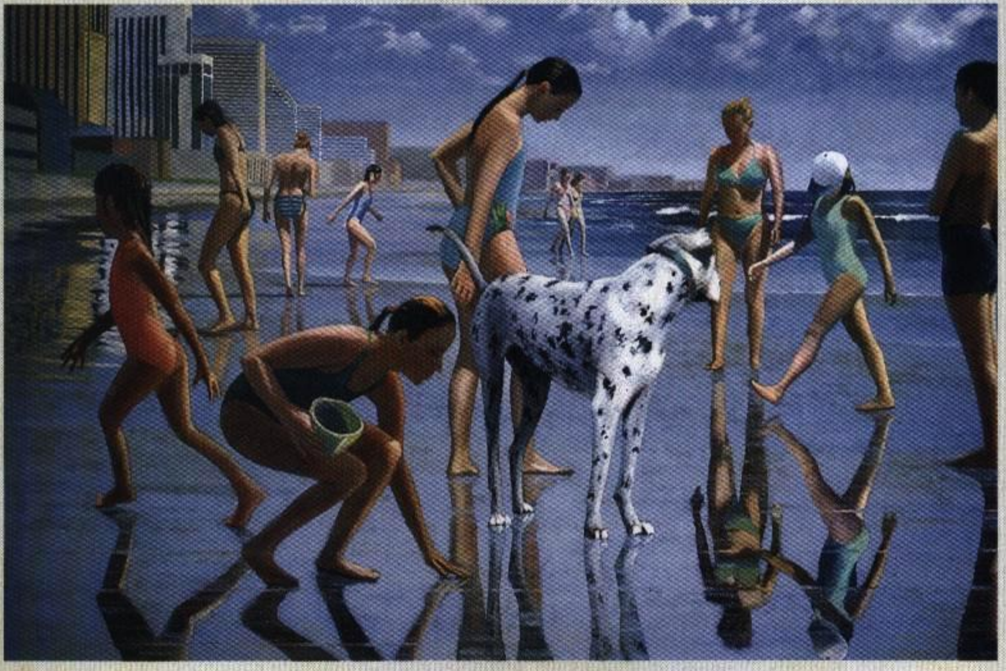
Ahlsted usually starts a picture with an underpainting. "I don't always follow the same method," he says. "Sometimes I simply put a flat version of the local color under each object and modify it later. At other times I put a warm earth color under the shadows and work it up from there." For his beach scenes, Ahlsted puts a coat of a brilliant burnt sienna under all the figures, a process that we can see in the step-by-step demonstration of *Long Beach Island.* Here the artist roughed in the painting of the beach, sea, and sky before carefully drawing the figures on top. The flesh of the figures was first outlined in a burnt-sienna line and then filled in flat. The bathing suits, however, received no underpainting. Because he works in oil, Ahlsted allows some time for the underpainting to dry before going over it with paint. He uses a medium made of Dorland's Wax Medium, damar varnish, turpentine, and stand oil in approximately equal measures. "I like to add the Dorland's Wax Medium because it gives a satiny finish to the painting," says the artist, who observes that this mixture allows for a good flow of paint and a considerable amount of transparency. Sometimes, if he is working outside, the artist will use Liquin in the early stages of a painting so he can get a faster drying time. Ahlsted uses bristle brushes in various shapes and sizes, which he varies from painting to painting. He uses oil paint by Winsor & Newton and Blockx.

For a number of smaller works, Ahlsted chooses to paint on gessoed Arches paper. "I really like the way that it takes the paint," he says, "but then I feel that I have to mount it under glass, which presents all kinds of problems." Some



**Step 1**
Using a pencil and working from photographs, Ahlsted made a simple and precise line drawing on his canvas. Then, starting at the top and working section by section down the canvas, he painted a simplified version of each element.





**Step 2 (above)**
At this stage some elements were left completely unpainted while others had already been developed to near-completion.

**Step 3 (left)**
The finished painting shows how the artist had built more complex color over the earlier stages. Detail had been added to the buildings in the background.

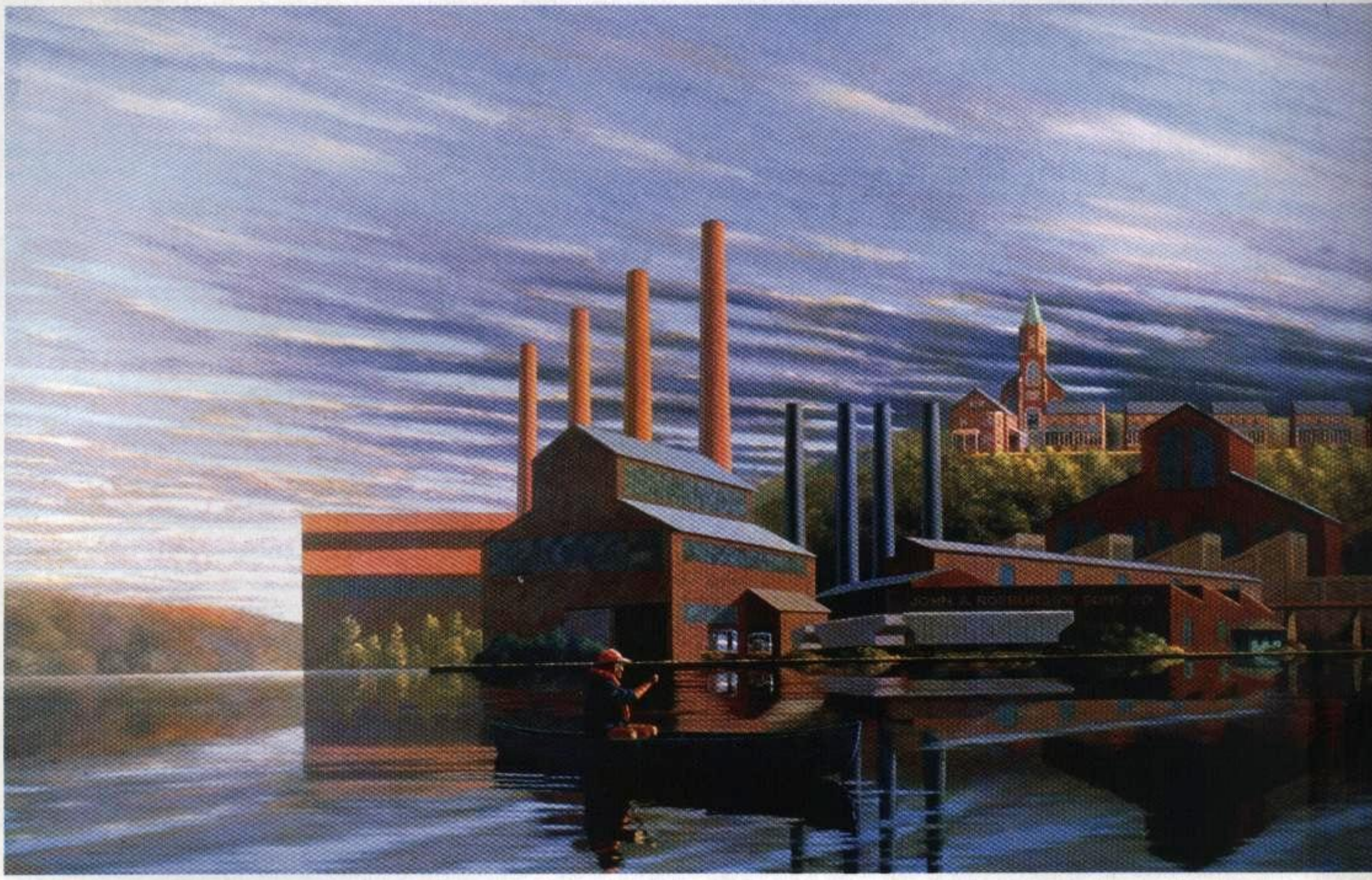
THE COMPLETED PAINTING:
**Jersey Shore**
1999, oil, 40 x 60.
Private collection.

**"I realized the power of using reflection to link together two separate spaces—foreground and background—and how that can create a tension between realistically rendered objects and the ambiguous painterly space they occupy."**

collectors, he says, have asked to remove the glass, and the artist is now planning to mount these pictures onto canvas or board and frame them without glass.

At a certain point in most paintings, Ahlsted carries on without reference to his subject matter, photographs, or sketches. "Often in the summer I'll take the painting outside to work in the daylight," he says. "Once I'm away from the subject matter I can see the picture much more clearly in its own right. It frees me up to make the changes that the painting itself requires." The artist allows himself considerable creative latitude at this stage as he further simplifies forms and explores the dramatic possibilities of the color.

Perhaps the most dramatic of Ahlsted's paintings are his long series of harbor scenes. "These began when I got a commission from the New Jersey State Capitol Commission in 1993," says the artist. "They needed paintings for the refurbished State Capitol building in Trenton, and I made a proposal for a room that looked directly over the Delaware River. I needed to get some references for river scenes and called up a tugboat company. The vice president turned out to be interested in art and gave me permission to sail on the tugboats all over the harbor and waterfronts. It gave me a wonderful viewpoint for seeing bridges, buildings, and ships." The artist not only completed many complex pictures in which these elements are assembled but, in paintings such as *Thunderstorm, Philadelphia,* he also makes dramatic use of the sky. "I've become very interested in how skies can be integrated with these scenes," says the artist. "They can greatly change the mood of a picture, and they can present shapes and directions that interact with other parts of the painting."





ABOVE

**Delaware River at Roebling, New Jersey**

1994, oil, 48 x 84. Collection New Jersey State Capitol Building, Trenton, New Jersey.

LEFT

**Thunderstorm, Philadelphia**

1998, oil, 48 x 48. Private collection.

OPPOSITE PAGE

**Tug on the Delaware**

1996, oil on gessoed paper, 23 x 23. Collection Menlo Park Veterans' Hospital, Edison, New Jersey.

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*To view an Online Exclusive gallery of work by David Ahlsted, visit the* American Artist *website.*

Santa Barbara artist **Ann Sanders** finds natural beauty in her surroundings and puts it down in pastel using proven methods—and she stresses that you can too. | **by Bob Bahr**

# The Practical Pastelist



ABOVE
**Devereux Afternoon**
2006, pastel, 11 x 15.
Collection Shirley Dettmann.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Bluff Eucalyptus**
2006, pastel, 22 x 16.
Collection Ann and Jeffrey Beth.
Sanders says capturing this scene from a distance allowed her to showcase the shape of the trees and the way the shadows hit the cliff.

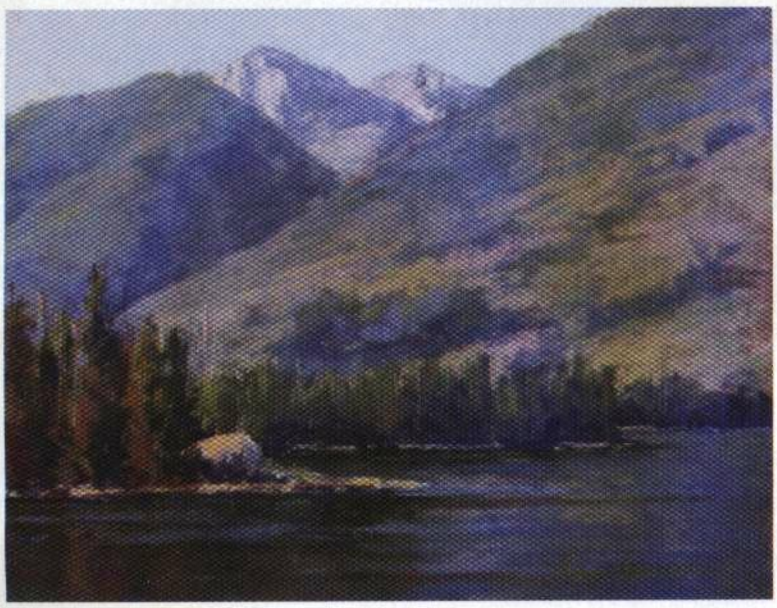
The scenes in Ann Sanders' pastel paintings are pretty, but they are very rarely postcard views. Sanders paints in locations with abundant natural beauty, places where a pleasing vista unfolds in nearly every direction. Then, she finds a particular vantage point that affirmatively answers two questions: Does it make a good composition? Does it move me?

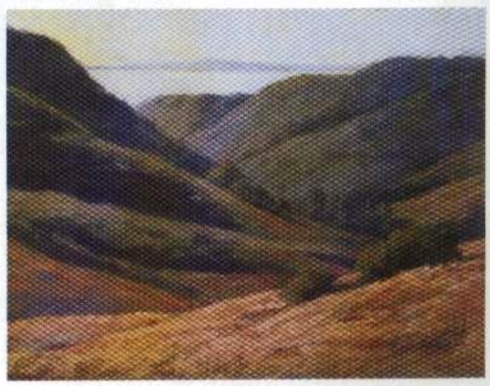
"Choosing a composition is usually the most stressful part of a painting for me," says Sanders. "When I find it, there's a sigh of relief, and once I get started, I can relax. But first I have to look around until I see an exciting juxtaposition of light and dark. I try to wait until I get a quiver of excitement from some aspect of a scene before I choose a composition. But I can't hesitate too long—the good light changes quickly in early-morning and late-afternoon paintings. In the afternoon it's a little easier because the longer I wait, the better the light gets. But in the morning, by the time I choose something, I already feel like I'm late!"

Sanders is practical in both her materials and her process: She works on Wallis Belgian Mist paper because the good tooth and neutral tone allow her to easily apply pigment and to work in both directions from a middle value. She starts with hard pastels and finishes with soft ones, as is convention. She works from dark to light in her underpainting, evaluates the compositional success of the abstract shapes, and then she fixes this block-in with a wash of denatured alcohol. "The alcohol brings the contrast down, especially with the lights, which are grayed way down," Sanders explains. "I prefer alcohol over Turpenoid because it dries much more quickly." The pastelist uses local color for the underpainting—except for foliage, which she believes benefits from being underpainted with a warm complement. She does not blend colors with her finger or another tool, preferring instead to lightly layer colors to achieve blends.

The first pastel set Sanders bought was a small kit of 30 Rembrandt sticks. She thought it would be







TOP

**Eucalyptus Sunset**

2006, pastel, 11 x 15. Collection Delia Smith.

ABOVE

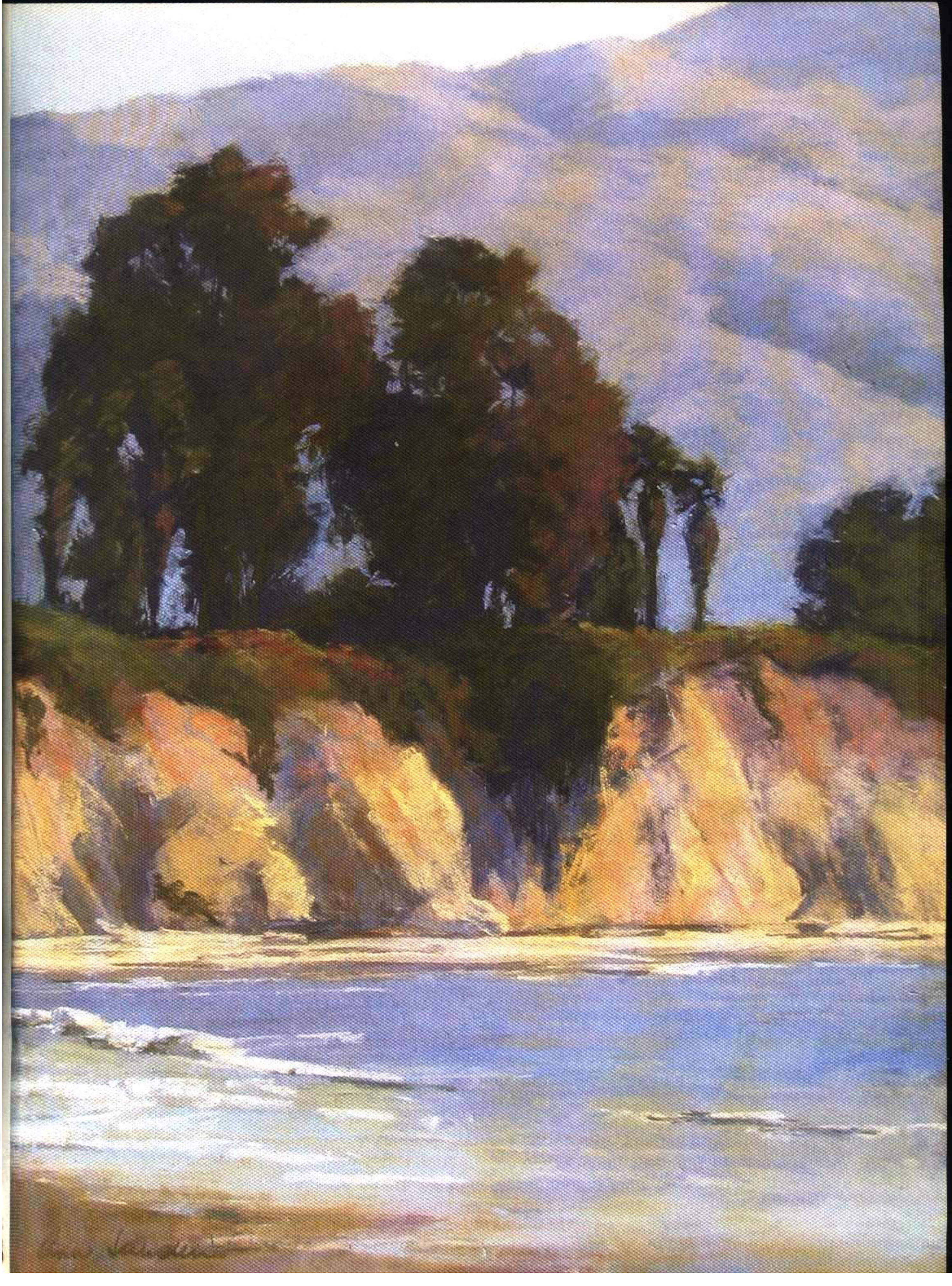
**La Paloma Morning**

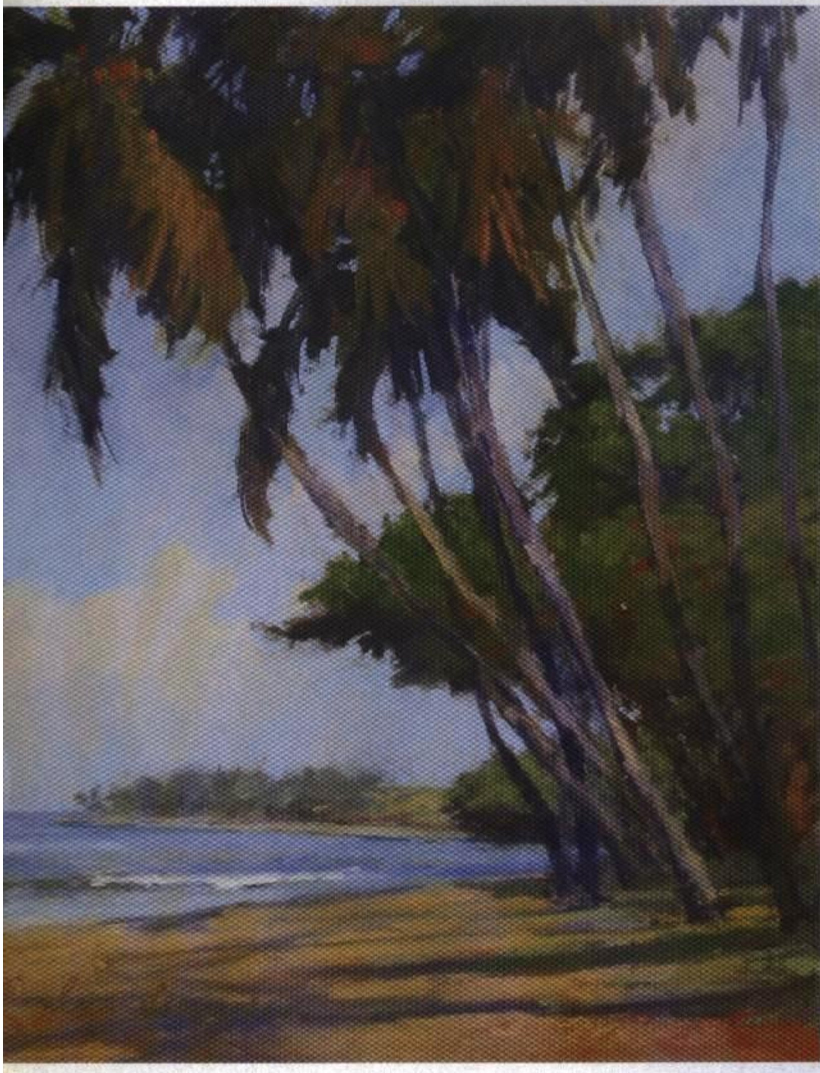
2006, pastel, 11 x 15.

LEFT

**Jenny Lake Morning**

2006, pastel, 8 x 10. Collection Mike and Ruth Ann Collins.





LEFT
**Launiopoko**
2006, pastel 10 x 8. All artwork this article collection the artist unless otherwise indicated.

"It's fun painting in Hawaii, but the colors are so different that I can't hang a Hawaiian painting next to a Santa Barbara painting," says Sanders. "The colors really don't go together at all—the light is so much brighter there and the water is so green. The colors here are much grayer."

BELOW
**Molino Canyon South**
2005, pastel, 16 x 22. Collection Joann Hymes.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Palm Sunset**
2006, pastel, 22 x 16. Collection Deborah Read.



enough, until friend and fellow pastelist Patti Flynn explained that the correct number of pastel sticks to buy is "as many as you can afford." Sanders now uses about 300 colors, taking the paper off and breaking each new stick into thirds because she prefers working with the sides of pieces rather than the ends. She uses the same kit for plein air and studio work, organized in a backpack-sized Heilman Pastel Box.

At first the artist was only interested in painting still lifes, but, after painting outdoors during a pastel class, she was immediately hooked on landscapes. "It was so wonderful, so peaceful, so inspiring," Sanders remembers. Landscapes now completely dominate her work, most of them featuring a balanced composition. "Paintings with a lot of sky are a challenge," she says. "It can be hard for me to make a sky interesting. Unless there is something special going on, I try to avoid a big sky. Same for a big foreground—I really admire artists who can pull that off." Very few of Sanders' pieces feature man-made structures, save for a handful of paintings done in France. "It's not that I take houses out of a scene but rather that I'm attracted to scenes without them," she explains. "In Provence, the structures appealed to me because they were different from what I see around here and because the structures helped me remember the place so well."

Sanders established an early commitment to protecting wild landscapes. For a landscape painter based in Santa Barbara, this is essentially a no-brainer. The artist says she feels fortunate to live in a beautiful area with weather that allows her to paint year-round. Many group shows in the Santa Barbara area have the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County or another environmental cause as their beneficiary. "By participating in these shows I feel like I can give back a little for the privilege of enjoying the open spaces and help in their preservation," the artist says.

Most of Sanders' work is done en plein air in one session. "I take a digital photograph at the start so I have a reference in the studio, but about 90 percent of the work is done on location," Sanders explains. "I try not to spend too much time laboring over things in the studio." The dimensions of her paintings are dictated by common sense too—and it's not merely a matter

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COVER:
**Artist and Model** (detail, reversed)
by Warren Chang





# Portland Museum of Art
## 2007 Biennial

The Portland Museum of Art, in Maine, recently announced the artists chosen for its 2007 Biennial exhibition. Artists submitted 3,680 images for consideration, and 98 works by 61 artists were selected for the show, which will be on display at the museum from April 12 through June 10. Among the artists selected for the exhibition were Alan Bray, Sandy Litchfield, Gail Spaien, and Meg Brown Payson.

The goal of the museum's biennial series is to create a visual record of Maine's evolving contemporary art scene and to emphasize the influence that the landscape, traditions, and people of Maine continue to have on its artists. Although the majority of artists featured in the biennial are Maine residents, a number are part-time residents or recent graduates from one of Maine's art programs who now live outside the state—a testament to Maine's far-reaching artistic influence.

For more information on the Portland Museum of Art, visit www.portlandmuseum.org.

TOP
**Flood**
by Alan Bray, 2006, casein on panel, 20 x 28. Courtesy Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, Maine.

ABOVE
**Up Castle Rock (detail)**
by Sandy Litchfield, 2006, oil and acrylic on Mylar, latex, and ink on wall, 11' x 38'. Collection the artist.




LEFT
**No Direction Home**
by Coulter Watt.

BELOW
**Neat!**
by Vicky McLain.





ABOVE
**Hymn**
by Linda Williamson.

# Gamblin Announces 2006 Torrit Grey Competition Winners

Gamblin Artist's Oil Colors recently announced Coulter Watt as the winner of its 2006 Torrit Grey Competition for his painting *No Direction Home*. Every spring, Gamblin collects the pigment dust from its Torit® air-filtration system and recycles it to create Gamblin torrit grey. The mixture is different every year, and the paint produced reflects this—the resulting color ranges from a medium dove gray to a dark, earthy gray.

The annual competition requires artists to complete a painting using only torrit grey and any black or white oil paint. More than 100 entries were received for the 2006 competition, and Watt received $250 in Gamblin artists' materials for his first-prize painting. Receiving awards for honorable mention were Vicky McLain for *Neat!* and Linda Williamson for *Hymn*.

For more information on Gamblin Artist's Colors, visit www.gamblincolors.com. For more information on first-prize winner Coulter Watt, visit www.coulterwatt.com.



BELOW
**Zinnias: View From the Window**
2006, acrylic, 40 x 30.

OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT
**Flowers in a Copper Pot**
2006, acrylic, 40 x 30.

OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT
**Spring Street Historical Museum**
2006, acrylic, 24 x 20.

explains. "I'll use a light pink, blue, or gray depending on whether I want a warm, cool, or neutral tone; and then I just start painting the focal point of the composition, usually in the middle of the canvas. I know a lot of artists avoid symmetrical compositions, but I really prefer to have the main object in the center. I then use textures, patterns, and shapes to lead the viewer's eyes around the composition. Ultimately everything in the picture has to work in harmony—the colors, shapes, values, and textures."

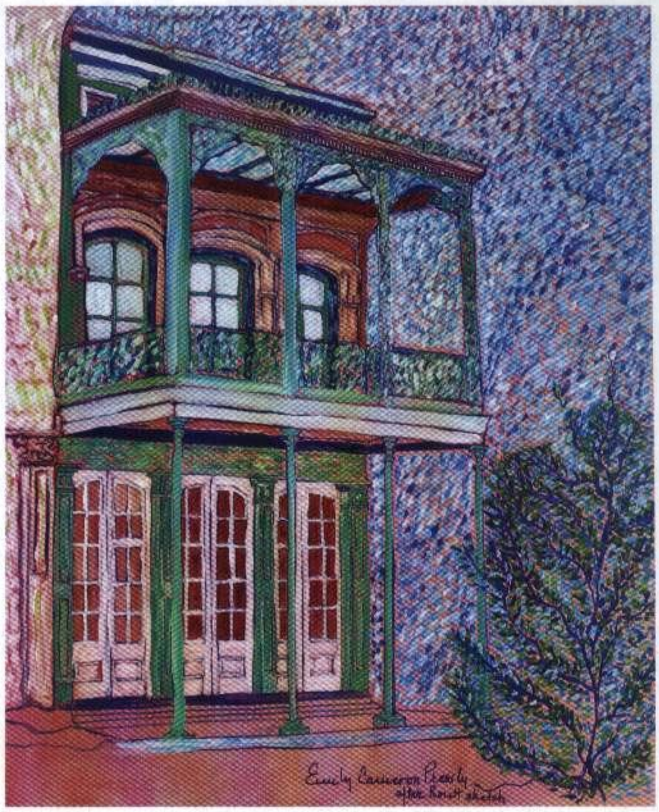


Pressly's compositions often become elaborate tapestries of colors and forms that remind viewers of the early 20th-century Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauvist painters. "I've always loved Bonnard, Van Gogh, and Matisse," she explains. "Their imaginative responses to the people and places that surrounded them are an inspiration to me. They could think about a favorite garden, person, street scene, or room and paint pictures that expressed everything they felt about those subjects."

Pressly's paintings are not completely based on imagination or recollection. She sometimes positions her canvas so she can respond to the scene out a window or door, or she uses a sketch or photograph of a building to establish an accurate record of structure. "The actual location is just a starting point, and I never worry about rendering a precise likeness of a building, floral arrangement, or landscape," she says. "The point is to make it my own by adding and subtracting elements, changing the colors, developing the textures, and doing whatever feels right at the moment. I never know what the final painting will look like when I get started, but I know what I feel about the subject, and that's the most important guide through the creative process."

Pressly's studio is a space she shares with her husband, archi-





# Warren Chang: Bringing the Past to the Present

This California-based artist uses a 19th-century palette to create a nostalgic atmosphere in his paintings. | **by John A. Parks**

Warren Chang paints scenes from two very industrious worlds: the agricultural enterprises near his home in Monterey, California, and the art studios and classes in which he works and teaches. Both these subjects were popular in the 19th century when painters such as Jean François Millet (1814–1875) and the Barbizon School artists painted scenes of the lowliest agricultural workers laboring out in the fields and when Henri Fantin-Latour (1836–1904) made famous images of artists working and socializing in their studios. Chang has taken the look and feel of those 19th-century pictures and given them a thoroughly contemporary dimension. The result is an intriguing dialogue between past and present in which contemporary imagery takes on the look of a past world and old painting conventions are demystified by a coolly modern attitude.

Chang achieves the look of his paintings by making use of a palette often associated with Swedish artist Anders Zorn (1860–1920). "It's really an extension of Zorn's limited palette," says Chang. "Before I began using it my color sense was always leaning toward tonalism so, regardless of how many colors I used on my palette, the color sense remained somewhat tonal and restrained." The artist says that he is very much a believer in "less is more" when it comes to color. "The power of red, for example, is due to the grays and browns that surround it," he asserts. "The limited palette allows me to control this type of color and helps me create the mood I'm trying to achieve." Chang acknowledges that this mood, which might best be described as one of quiet restraint, has distinctly nostalgic overtones. He feels that the fine control his palette gives him over close value relationships greatly helps the

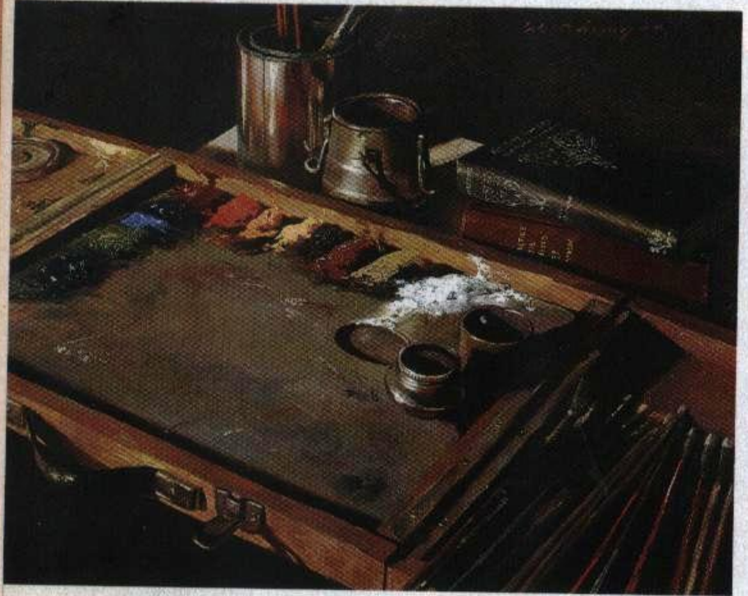
OPPOSITE PAGE
**Entrance**
2003, oil, 40 x 30
Courtesy Morseburg Galleries, West Hollywood, California



BELOW LEFT
**Artist's Palette**
2004, oil, 14 x 18.
Collection the artist.

BELOW RIGHT
**Portrait of Greg**
2005, oil, 28 x 24.
Collection the artist.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Studio at Chestnut**
2006, oil, 30 x 40.
Collection the artist.





## Chang's Materials

### Palette

The following limited palette (Chang occasionally adds cerulean blue):

- *Cremnitz white*
- *yellow ochre*
- *cadmium yellow*
- *cadmium orange*
- *cadmium red*
- *terra rosa*
- *burnt sienna*
- *raw umber*
- *ivory black*

### Surface

- oil-primed linen, hand-stretched by the artist

### Brushes

- a variety of bristle and sable brushes in various sizes and shapes (occasionally Chang will use a fan brush or put some paint on with a palette knife)

strength of this mood. "I use Cremnitz white, yellow och cadmium yellow, cadmium orange, cadmium red, terra r burnt sienna, raw umber, and ivory black," says the artist "The palette leans heavily on the warmer earth tones so n blues can easily be achieved by simply using black and white. Occasionally I will add cerulean blue when paintir subjects under natural light."

Chang explores an idea for a painting in a rough graphite sketch. "Usually I'm working from photographs he says, "although sometimes I will do a sketch on-site. I not ashamed of using photographs—I make no apologies whatsoever. It seems quite immaterial to me whether a work was painted from a photograph or from life." The artist will often use multiple photographs to put together scene that he will then sketch on a canvas. "I don't use an mechanical means to transfer images," he says. "Generall I have no problem just drawing it by eye." The painting



### The Thumbnail Sketch

Using reference photos taken in the field, Chang did a 4"-x-6" pen-and-ink thumbnail sketch on paper to establish the composition and content of the scene.



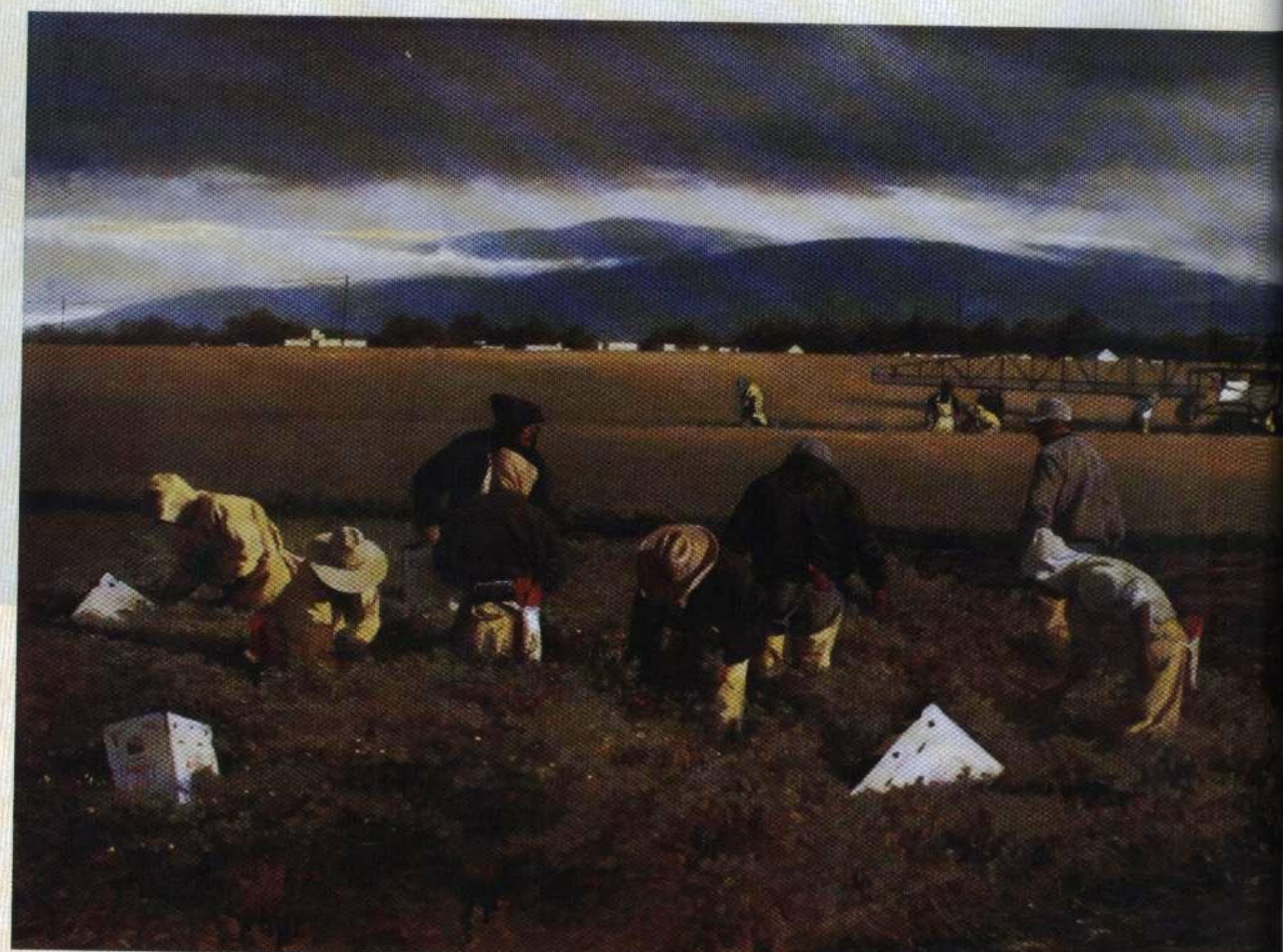
### The Color Sketch

The artist spent a couple of days completing this 12"-x-16" oil sketch on canvas, which gave him all the necessary information he would need to transfer the image to a larger scale.



### The Underpainting

In this underpainting done in raw umber, Chang solved his drawing and compositional issues while also establishing the tonal values and mood.



THE COMPLETED PAINTING:

**Approaching Storm: Broccoli Harvest**

2006, oil, 30 x 40. Collection the artist.

Building off the thumbnail sketch, color sketch, and the underpainting he already established, Chang used a limited palette—with the exception of some blue and green—to complete this painting. "The blue of the sky was achieved using black and white," Chang reveals, "and I arrived at the greens using mixtures of yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, and black."





ABOVE LEFT
**End of Day II**
2006, oil, 24 x 30.
Courtesy Hauk Fine Arts, Pacific Grove, California.

BELOW LEFT
**Dusk**
2005, oil, 24 x 30.
Courtesy Hauk Fine Arts, Pacific Grove, California.

Monterey County," he says. "There is a historical precedent starting with the 19th-century French peasant painter Millet and the Naturalist movement in general of the mid-19th century. Artists Winslow Homer [1836–1910], Eastman Johnson [1824–1906], and later Thomas Hart Benton [1889–1975] all painted fieldworkers. I feel that I am continuing this tradition." Although Chang insists that he has no political axe to grind, the very act of painting dignifies the subject and brings it to the public's attention. Paintings such as *End of Day* and *Dusk* may be suffused with a gloriously modulated romantic light, but the hunched figures of tired laborers tip us off to the fact that the world we are looking at is no paradise.

Chang's paintings of studio life are also very much inspired by 19th-century art. "My painting *The Demonstration* was inspired by Fantin-Latour's *A Studio at Batignolles,"* says the artist. "Fantin-Latour depicted Manet giving a demonstration with a young Monet and Renoir, among others, overlooking this influential artist. I was teaching a figure-painting course at the Academy of Art University, in San Francisco, and asked the students to help in posing for the painting. In this way they could see first-hand my approach and method in constructing a picture." The students were all too happy to agree, and Chang posed and photographed them before putting the painting together. "The lighting, of course, is impossible," he confesses. "But nobody notices that the canvas I'm painting in the picture would, in fact, be lost in shadow." Chang remarks that he was interested in how casual the clothes of today's young students are compared to the more 'proper' 19th-century attire in the painting by Fantin-Latour. He also included women in the picture, while Fantin-Latour

## Art-Historical Comparison







ABOVE LEFT
**The Demonstration**
2004, oil, 30 x 40.
Private collection.

ABOVE RIGHT
**Underpainting for *The Demonstration***
2004, oil, 30 x 40.
Private collection.

LEFT
**A Studio at Batignolles**
by Henri Fantin-Latour, 1870, oil, 80 x 108.
Collection Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

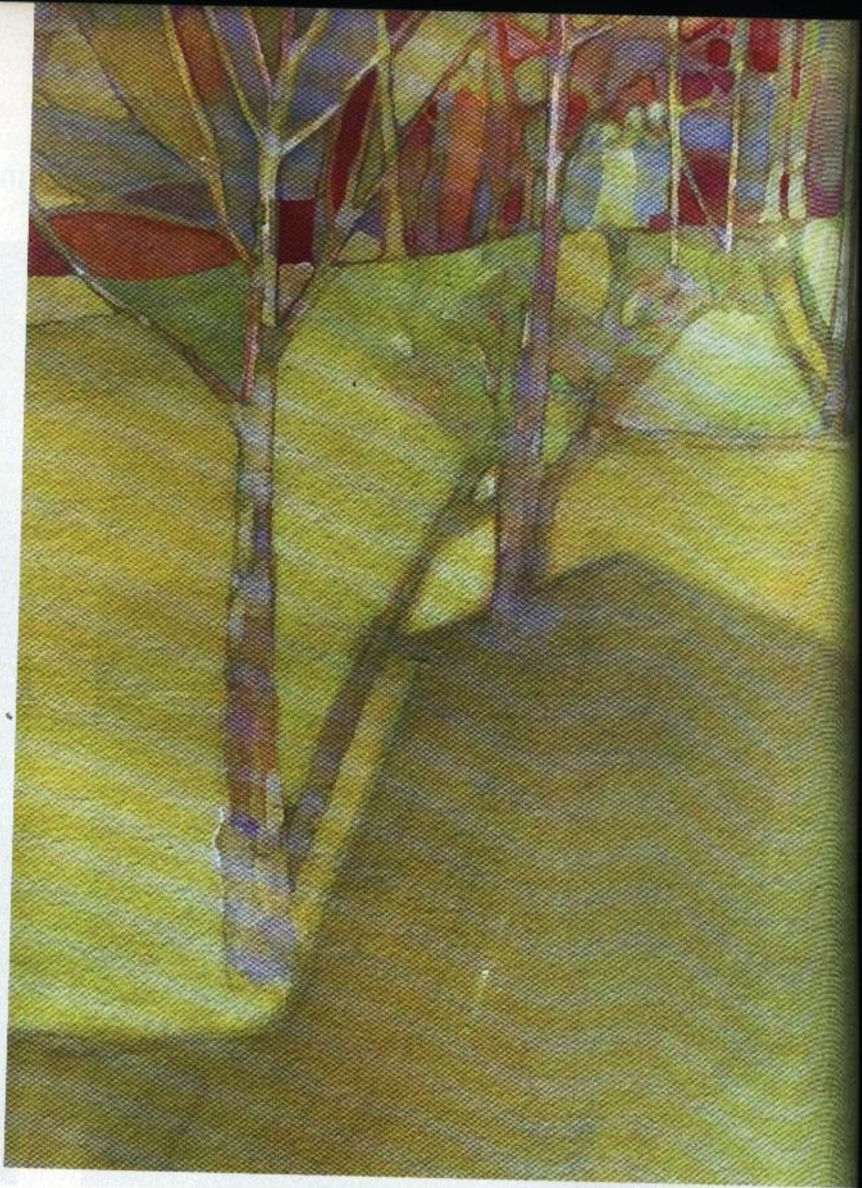
Chang based *The Demonstration* on Fantin-Latour's 19th-century work *A Studio at Batignolles*, which depicts Manet giving a demonstration to a young Monet and Renoir, among other artists. "I was teaching a figure-painting course at the Academy of Art University, in San Francisco, and asked the students to help in posing for this painting," Chang says. "What's most interesting to me is how the students of today have a much more casual dress as well as the fact that there are women artists present, whereas in 19th-century Europe there was a much more somber dress and an all-male presence."

lived in a world in which a woman artist was a great rarity. Again, a charming interplay is achieved between past and present as the casually dressed young students take on some of the orderly posture and formality of the 19th-century group in the Fantin-Latour painting.

In Chang's painting *Studio at Chestnut*, the artist conjures up a modern art class in a way that feels more contemporary. A group of students works at easels facing a model who is illuminated by a brilliant halo of incandescent light. A teacher is busy giving instruction to one of the students while balancing himself confidently on a stool. Meanwhile daylight creeps into the scene from the left, and fluorescent light is also apparent. "I centered the painting around the warm, yellow light hitting the model," says the artist, "but I wanted the scene to feel completely candid and natural, without it feeling like a photograph." Chang says that photography will often give remarkable images of poses and movements that would be impossible to capture from life. The problem is that the paintings done from such images can take on a photographic appearance. Chang is careful, therefore, to edit his paintings so that they retain a painted feel. The artist says *Studio at Chestnut* was one of the rare paintings for which he added a cerulean blue to his palette. "There was no other way to get the cool highlights from the daylight and fluorescent light sources," he admits.

As for his choice of studio life as subject matter, the artist feels that it guarantees an authenticity to the work. "When I first fully embarked on a career in fine art in 2001, I struggled with what to paint," he says. "After a 20-year career as an illustrator, during which I was always told what to paint, it was difficult to find a subject that was relevant to me and thus have some substance. By choosing my studio and classroom environments, I discovered a wealth of interesting subjects that were relevant, since this is where I spend most of my time, outside time spent with my family. Much of my subject matter is derived from my relationship to the classroom and to the people who inhabit it: the artists, models, and students."

Chang feels that his teaching has aided him considerably as a fine artist. "It has helped me verbalize my theories of painting both in application and theory," he says. "It also



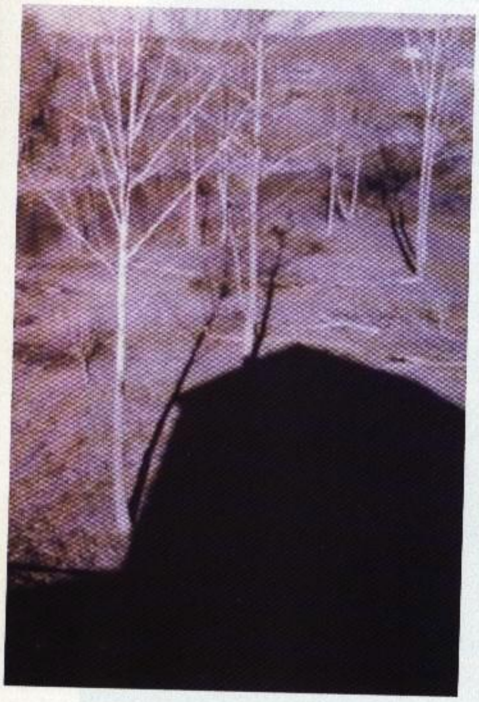
RIGHT

**Walter's Heaven**

2006, watercolor, 30 x 22. All artwork this article collection the artist.

BELOW

Reference photo for *Walter's Heaven.*







LEFT

**View From Studio**

2006, watercolor, 22 x 30.

ABOVE

Reference photo for *View From Studio.*


Alyona Nickelsen




Alyona Nickelsen 11/04

# Painterly Effects With Colored Pencil

California artist **Alyona Nickelsen** uses odorless mineral spirits to dissolve some of the pigment in her colored pencil drawings, eliminating the pencil strokes and creating rich, luminous color.

**by Lynne Moss Perricelli**

ABOVE

**Sincerely Yours**

2006, colored pencil, 9½ x 11. Collection the artist.

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT

**Curve Appeal**

2005, colored pencil, 13½ x 12. Collection the artist.

OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT

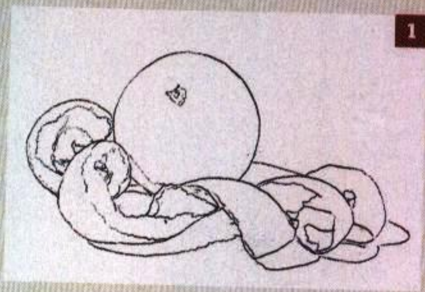
**Ripe Point of View**

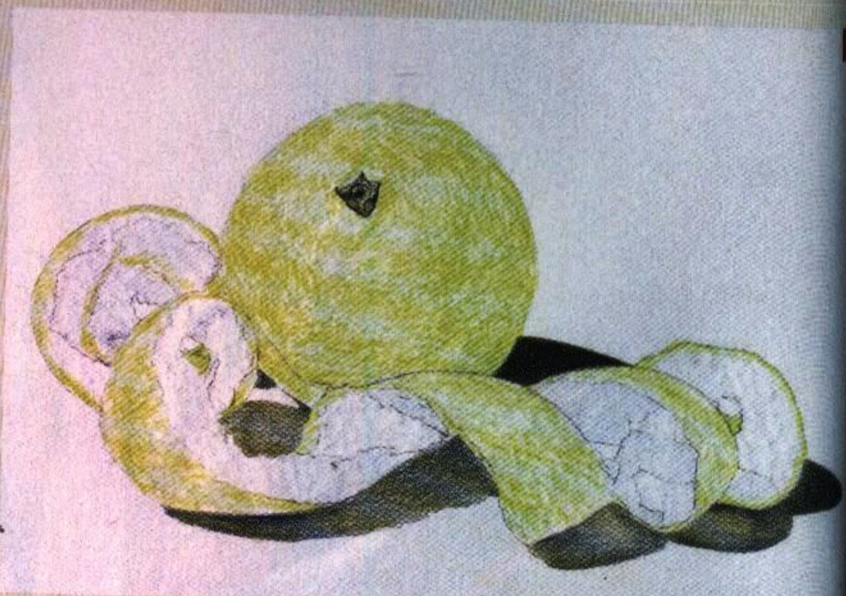
2004, colored pencil, 8½ x 11½. Courtesy Art Source Gallery, Reno, Nevada.

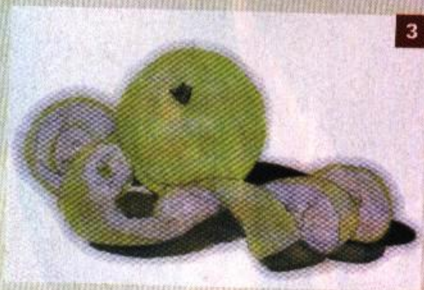
Viewers are often puzzled upon first seeing a drawing by Alyona Nickelsen. "What medium is this?" they invariably ask. With the brilliant color and smooth surface of the drawings, most are surprised to learn Nickelsen's medium is colored pencil. Attracted to vibrant color and painterly effects—but adverse to the odor of turpentine and the inconvenience of oil—the artist devised a technique in which she carefully blends some 20 to 30 layers of colored pencil and uses Gamblin Gamsol odorless mineral spirits to dissolve some of the pigment in the process. The result yields the luscious color and forms of the fruits and flowers that first caught the artist's eye.

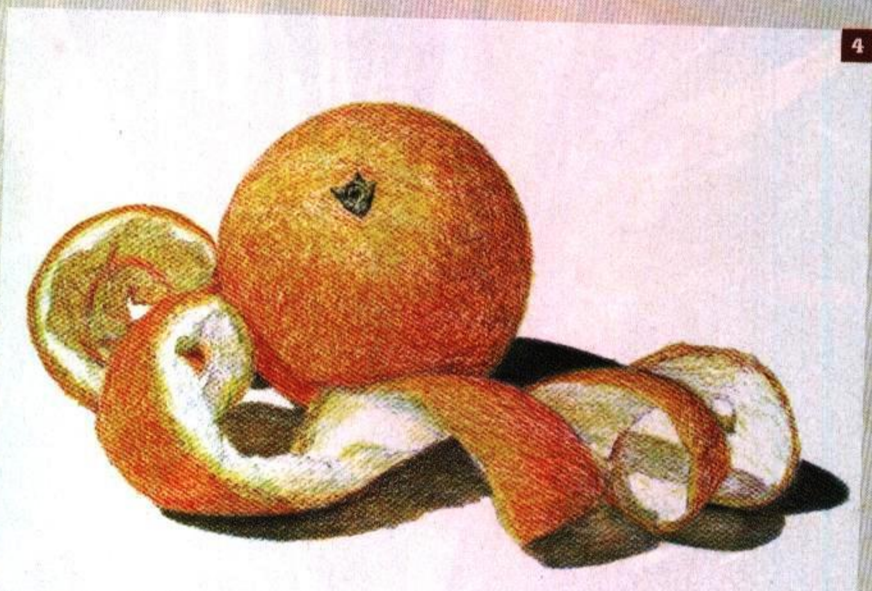
Like many still-life artists, Nickelsen finds her subjects in her everyday life: at the market or in her own kitchen. First she envisions the painting, then seeks out the subjects. Once she has collected and assembled all the items for a setup, she conducts numerous photo sessions over the course of several weeks, using different light effects and points of view. Using her Nikon 8800 digital camera, she takes hundreds of photos. "Most of


Alyona Nickelsen 8/04













**Step 1**
The initial sketch provided a basic contour and positioned the objects. It also showed the light source and shadow direction.

**Step 2**
Before applying any color, the artist used her "roughening" technique on all surfaces of the orange and orange peel. She did this by pressing pumice stone against the opposite side of the drawing to make impressions with a random pattern. Next, to make the rough texture more prominent, she applied color with a relatively dull point and almost parallel to the surface of the paper. She then started laying in with lemon yellow on the orange, sky blue light on the shadowed areas of the pith, and kelp green and indigo blue on the shadow.

**Step 3**
The first mineral-spirits wash gave a buttery feel to the surface and blended the colors together. After the wash dried, the artist continued applying layers of color.

**Step 4**
Nickelsen further developed colors with a light application of canary yellow, yellowed orange, pale vermillion, and carmine red on the orange and orange peel. Greyed lavender, pale sage, cream, and peach were added to the pith for shading. Then, touches of salmon pink were applied to the darkest areas of the pith to provide depth. To the shadow the artist added cream, goldenrod, and touches of burnt ochre.

**Step 5**
The second mineral-spirits wash unified the colors and initiated the painterly effect.

**Step 6**
Here, the artist used poppy red, Spanish orange, burnt ochre, sienna brown, raspberry, artichoke, and kelp green on the orange and orange peel. She then applied indigo blue to the shaded area of the orange surface to enhance the three-dimensional effect. On the pith she used jasmine. Mineral orange and artichoke were added to the darkest area of the pith. Lemon yellow, pumpkin orange, and Tuscan red gave life to the shadow.



**Step 7**

A third mineral-spirits wash and burnishing certain areas with white merged color layers for a more complete appearance.




**Step 8**

In the last step Nickelsen reused all previous colors, adjusted values, and blended with a colorless blender. Some parts were then burnished with white again. Finally, she worked on the details and added highlights with an X-Acto knife.




THE COMPLETED DRAWING:
**Orange Thoughts**
2006, colored pencil,
7 x 10. Collection the artist.



# scape

**WILLIAM ANZALONE'S LANDSCAPES REFLECT A TEXAS TERRAIN THAT ENTRANCES HIM MORE EACH PASSING DAY**

**BY VIRGINIA CAMPBELL**

**IT SHOULDN'T BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTING** to note that a certain painter draws well. Drawing is one of those basic skills you figure every artist had better have down. Still, unimaginable as it might have been at the turn of the last century for a painter to consider drawing superfluous, by the mid-20th century a great many did, and at the turn of the 21st century—by which time many artists had long deemed painting itself irrelevant—there were a surprisingly large number of painters who probably couldn't doodle their way around a cocktail napkin.

So it is actually worth noting that Texas painter William Anzalone draws very well, both with oil paint and with pastel. He

OPPOSITE PAGE: WARM MORNING, OIL, 46 X 60.
THIS PAGE: INTERSECTIONS, OIL, 30 X 40.

draws so beautifully, in fact, that he can make fields of long grass and stands of bare trees—his frequent subjects—testaments to how visually compelling the natural world is in even its least dramatic aspect. Other qualities of his work stand out, too. His compositions, while capturing the lovely superficial randomness of flora and topography, are so reticently convincing that you feel you are getting glimpses of some ultimate, invisible order. His layers of



ABOVE: UNTITLED, PASTEL/GOUACHE, 11 X 15.
OPPOSITE PAGE: SCREEN, OIL, 40 X 60.

transparent paint often build into radiance that makes it seem like the earth is glowing, rather than merely bathing, in the sun's light. And his odd complementary color couplings—far more yellows against lavenders than reds against greens—give his landscapes unexpected, elusive emotion.

You could justifiably assume that Anzalone's curiosity and ambition are what drive his clear preference for the patterns and perspective of fall, winter, and spring landscape over the opaque luxuries of summer. But there's another, equally important factor, one that is—pardon the pun—out of left field: snakes. Anzalone lives in a small, rural town between Houston and Austin, where the obvious vexations of summer heat and humidity are trumped—at least for him—by the menace of water moccasins.

"I don't like snakes," the artist declares. By no means a plein-air painter in any case, Anzalone is, he goes on to disclose, loathe to venture into nature during the season of heavy foliage even so far as to walk across a field. "If I'm gonna get myself bit, I'm gonna know what bit me," he explains, warming to his topic. "When I'm working in grass near water, I'm nervous. Water moccasins are aggressive—they'll come get you. I never sit down on logs. And I carry a 38 loaded with rat shot. I'm scared. Cowards are careful. I'm very careful. So far I haven't been bit."

Inasmuch as Anzalone was born in 1926 and has never been molested by a reptile yet, his mini-diatribe about water moccasins makes it tough to keep a straight face. Now imagine all this said in a Brooklyn accent that half a century of Texas living hasn't blunted. (Anzalone sounds like a non-whiny Woody

**"I HAVE A GOOD VISUAL MEMORY, AND PROBABLY 50 PERCENT OF WHAT'S IN A PAINTING IS REMEMBERED."**

Allen—with whom, in fact, he went to high school in Flatbush.) The cognitive dissonance produced by trying to reconcile the quiet, almost Asian subtlety of Anzalone's most recent landscapes with the inflected verbal energy of his conversation has a pleasant, comic edge to it that's ultimately instructive. Restless imaginations over long stretches of time become more, rather than less, unpredictable.

**ANZALONE GREW UP** in his Brooklyn neighborhood with a talent for mathematics and physics that an uncle, with whom he was closer than he was to his own father, encouraged. Because his uncle was an engineer, the young Anzalone aimed himself in that direction and headed to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston for college. He had, at this point, no inclination toward art. But once fully acquainted with the nitty-gritty of engineering, he switched to architecture, which led to drawing and painting classes. The seed that grew later into his art career was planted in a lecture course given by an especially brilliant professor who, taking a broad view of architecture, examined how the human eye interprets visual information to conceive a three-dimensional world, and how three-dimensional space was represented in art before and after the discovery of perspective.

It was during this time that Anzalone began looking at painting with new eyes, and being in Boston



gave him rich opportunities to see masterpieces. The one that knocked his aesthetic socks off was Gauguin's great (and largest) painting, WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING? You can detect the influence of this experience on Anzalone's way of seeing, particularly in his use of color, right up to today in pictures like A LITTLE MORAN.

When he graduated from MIT, Anzalone was already married and the father of a baby daughter. If it had entered his mind to become an artist, he was in no position to act on the idea. Instead, he took a job at a small architectural firm on Cape Cod and spent the next year drafting plans for summer homes for the wealthy seasonal population of the Cape. During that time he did figure drawings and nonobjective paintings in acrylics on paper. At that point, for no particular reason, a friend who lived in Houston called up and suggested he come to Houston to paint. With his wife and daughter, he did exactly that. "I do strange things," says Anzalone, "and that was one of the strangest."

Houston in the 1950s was much farther away from New York and New England than it is now, and it was a smaller, looser place, too. "Every gallery in Boston would have thrown me out," says Anzalone, "but Meredith Long took me on." Long has remained Anzalone's representative for half a century. "I listened to him," says Anzalone, "and he's never interfered with my work." Long might have wanted to interfere, though, when Anzalone abandoned his abstract images for representational painting. "I had 20-some people waiting for my nonobjective paintings, and I was painting figures. I'd decided that's where I wanted to go. Nonobjective painting seemed to me to be a dead-end street." Anzalone hasn't looked back since then. "I agree with [the painter] Francis Bacon, who said nonobjective painting is basically decorative. Nonobjective paintings are nice. I can admire them. Hang 'em over the couch. But I don't get worked up by them."

Shortly after establishing himself in Houston, Anzalone, armed with his background in architecture

and a degree from MIT, was offered a teaching position at the University of Houston, where he remained a faculty member until 1993. "I was at the right place at the right time," says the artist of the freedom that a university job afforded him. "It gave me the opportunity to paint a lot of bad pictures and not show them to anybody." Houston also provided an environment that was, according to Anzalone, vibrant and interesting for artists. The major contemporary artist Julian Schnabel was one of Anzalone's students: "He was already Julian Schnabel when he walked in the door," says Anzalone of the student who became a New York superstar in the 1980s. "The only thing we could take credit for at the university was that we didn't screw him up entirely."

Though teaching created financial security and a pleasing community for Anzalone, it had a downside, too. "I was a natural teacher, and I liked it," he says. "I like people. But teaching is not a good way to support yourself as a painter if you're serious about teaching, which I was. The intellectual demands of teaching are rigorous, and you have to stay up to date with what's going on in the art world. It affected my work—my figures began to get too realistic. You begin to ask, 'Am I using my gut or my brain?' I never got where I wanted to get while I was teaching. It wouldn't have taken me as long to get to the work I'm doing now if I hadn't taught all that time."

Paintings done over the 12 years since Anzalone retired are a marked departure from his previous work. His work today acknowledges both tonalism and Impressionism, as well as the post-Impressionist experiments with color. "The kind of paintings I do now were more the oddity than the direction before," he says. Landscape, which he only started doing in the late '80s, has taken over as his primary interest. He explains, "I started going out to sketch, using just a small spiral pad and ballpoint pen. You can't climb over barbed-wire fences carrying a lot of stuff with you. I'll do the same sketch three or four times with different light. I have a good visual memory, and probably 50 percent of what's in a painting is remembered. I blank out on names, but if I've seen something, I remember it."

Having achieved his ideal working conditions only late in life, Anzalone is intent on keeping his creativity going, which means maintaining his health and strength. "I started running at 40," he says. "I run three or four times a week, and I lift weights three



ABOVE: PICKING, OIL, 60 X 46.
OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: A LITTLE MORAN, OIL, 16 X 20.
OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: SUNLIGHT IN A WINDOW, OIL, 46 X 60.

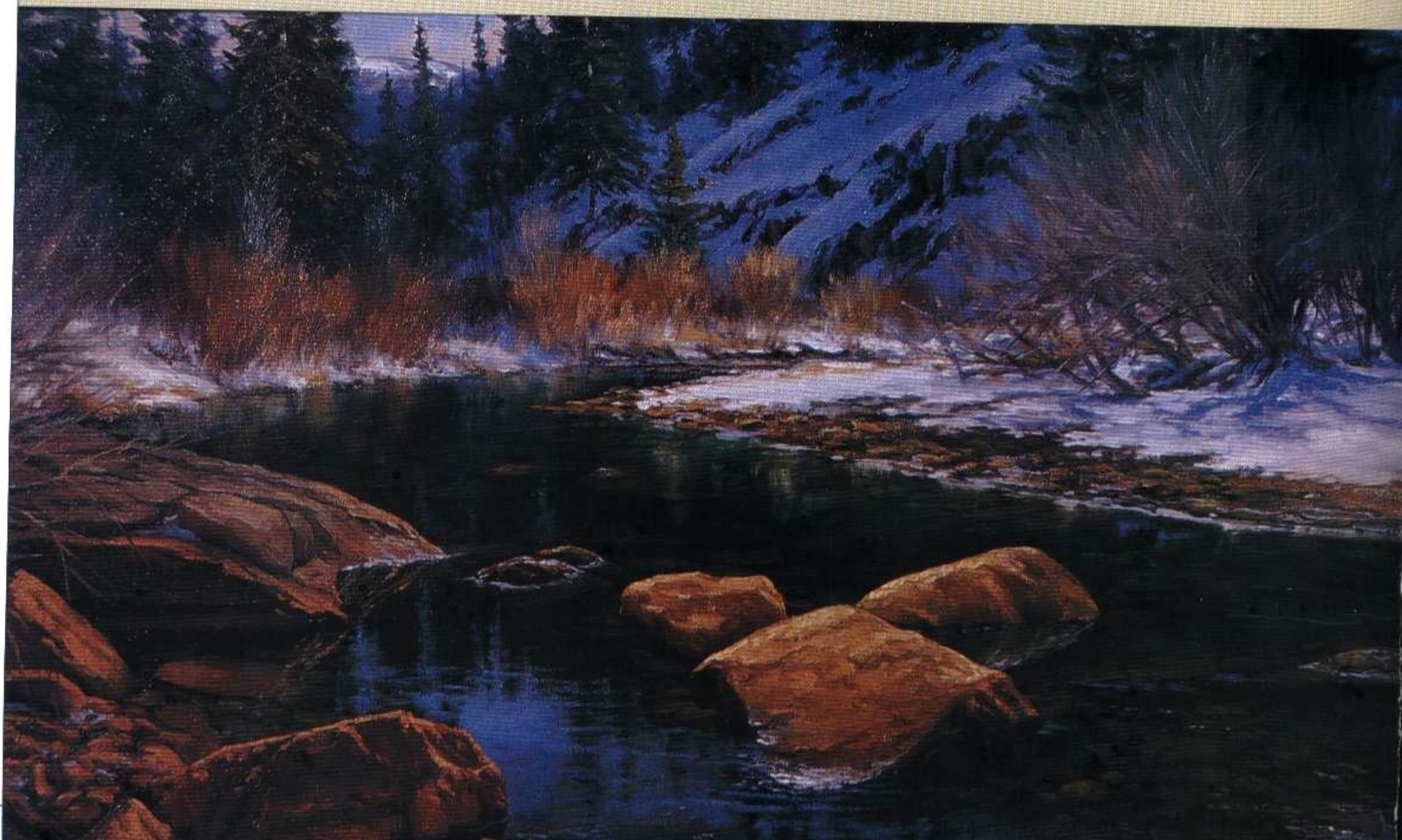
or four times a week. I don't want to end up having to use a walker. I admit I'm a fanatic about fitness—it would be a lie if I said I wasn't. In fact, I'm fanatical about everything I do that I'm passionate about." That probably explains why, until he recently added a studio onto his home, he unashamedly laid claim to whatever space in the house he wanted for painting. "I always took the best room for my studio, usually

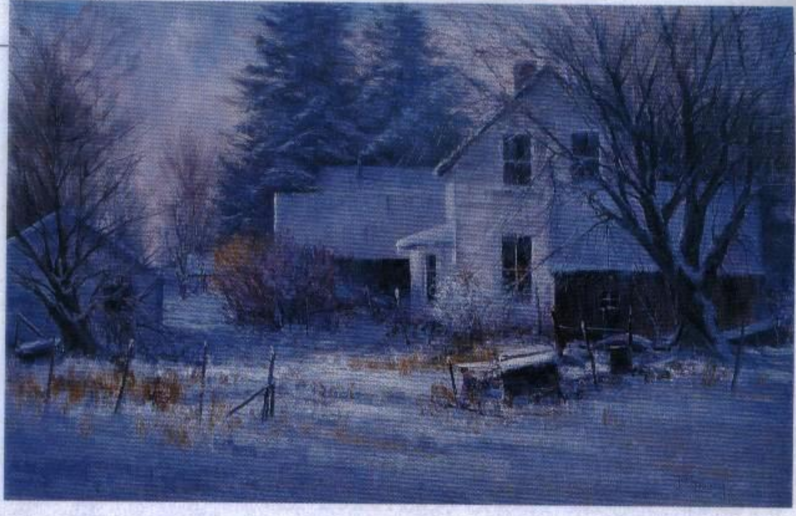
CONTINUED ON PAGE 138











his despondent friend. "Your family owns a business," the grad student reminded him. "Why not go back home, work with your dad, and teach yourself to paint?"

Lockhart did just that. For 10 years he worked at his family's retail furniture business in Monte Vista, spending evenings and weekends studying art books. Later he took workshops with artists such as Ted Goerschner, Ray Vinella, Skip Whitcomb, and Clyde Aspevig. After one of his first plein-air workshops 12 miles up a canyon from Sedona, AZ, Lockhart loaded up his gear and then realized he'd locked his keys in his trunk. With no money to pay the locksmith who drove up the canyon to retrieve his keys, Lockhart pulled out what he considered his first successful plein-air piece and proposed a trade. "Are you gonna be famous someday?" the locksmith asked. "I hope so," the artist replied. The deal was done. "That was really the thing that kicked me into gear," Lockhart remembers. "I got home and worked and worked."

ABOVE: JANUARY MORNING, OIL, 24 X 36.
BELOW: SHAW LAKE ASPENS, OIL, 12 X 16.



After that back-door sale, the artist's final important doorway turned out to be the front door of his father's furniture store, which Lockhart turned into a surprise entry into the art world. He became president of a local artists' group, then began organizing annual art shows in the store: The concept was that paintings could be viewed there in a home-like setting among the furniture. Art sales soared. The show grew each year, and regionally renowned painters were brought in as judges.

**"I FEEL ALMOST A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GIVE PEOPLE IMAGES OF WHAT I HOLD DEAR IN MY HEART."**

Finally, in 1984, Lockhart held his own first one-artist show. Featuring 65 of his acrylic and watercolor paintings, it sold out on opening night. When his success was repeated the following year, his father called him into his office the next morning, handed Lockhart his final paycheck, and resigned himself to the fact that he'd lost a good employee.

NOW 52, THE WARM AND AFFABLE ARTIST owns La Casa de Luz, a gallery and studio in his landmark 113-year-old home on Monte Vista's Main Street. Converted to California mission style in a 1930s renovation, the home stands out with its thick white walls, red tile roof, and wrought iron. Large north-facing windows light the artist's easel and oil-based palette in the main studio and gallery. His separate watercolor and pastel studio upstairs has equally good north light.

Yes, two studios and three mediums (plus occasional work in acrylics), employed with equal levels of proficiency. This versatility is the result of years of honing his skills and feeling out his artistic voice. He also trained himself to excel in wildlife art, earning best of show for birds of prey at the 1993 National Ducks Unlimited show. In the past few years he's narrowed his focus, giving most



# Imperfect Beauty

**Elaine Holien** delights in the patterns of nature—and in disrupting them **By Devon Jackson**



**WHEN YOU DEVELOP A PATTERN,** you move faster through wherever place you're in. Until, that is, the pattern breaks, or it's interrupted, or it merely runs out of steam and disappears. Like it or not, that's often how things work—in life, in nature, in art. And especially in the art of Elaine Holien, whose seemingly simple landscapes and abstract works are anything but, and whose penchant for patterns almost always acquiesces to an equally powerful recognition that nothing is perfect.

Sometimes it's a "wrong" color in her paintings (a too-purple mountain, a dishwater-green sky above a liver-colored butte), sometimes it's the overly reductive representation of juniper bushes and other high-desert vegetation as so many amorphous shapes. "My husband calls my style slapdash, and it's true—I do tend to hurry things, like a New Yorker," admits Holien.

Born in the New York City borough of Queens in 1947 and raised there by a father who worked as a lead mechanic with United Airlines and a mother who worked as a lab technician researching cures for arthritis, Holien remembers watching the world go by from her second-story window as a little girl. "It was hypnotic to be above everything and look down and watch people," recalls Holien, who relocated to Santa Fe, NM, nearly 25 years ago with her husband, Tom, a Santa Fe native. "I loved looking, and I still do. The sky, people, clouds moving over the ocean, anything. I stare at stuff so much, by now I almost don't need things in front of me in order to paint them. It's like it's there, and I just need to fill it in. It's very easy and very relaxing."

As a young girl, already able to read before being sent off to grade school, she'd fill up all

OPPOSITE PAGE: RED CLIFFS, RIO HONDO, WATERCOLOR, 22 X 30.
THIS PAGE: RIO GRANDE GORGE, OIL, 30 X 40.





ABOVE: SCOTTISH BROOM, OIL, 40 X 30.
RIGHT: LAVENDER FIELD, OIL, 30 X 40.

in me, which I didn't know was there, just grew and grew," she says. (Nowadays she channels this competitive intensity as much into her love of golf as she does into her career as an artist, spending her winters in southern Florida partly to be with her father and other aging members of her family but also to hit the links.)

By the early 1990s, Holien realized that all those years she'd spent outdoors—both sketching during digs and while working *en plein air*, staring for hours on end at her large, white, sunlight-reflecting canvases—had caused irreversible damage to her eyes. This forced her to start painting smaller canvases, and it drove her indoors. Her current studio is a converted garage behind her house. Luckily, her condition—which is mostly night blindness—affected only her approach, not her creativity. "I started to use the watercolors differently," she explains. "I'd do a dozen of the little watercolors and then pick one and work on it, or I'd take three or four of the watercolors and combine them, working them up into a bigger piece, or into an oil painting. That made it much easier on my eyes."

It helped, too, that by the time her vision began to falter, she'd already observed—and remembered—so much that it hardly mattered. "I have a mental picture of what I want," explains Holien, who draws inspiration from sources as diverse as the accoutrements of sumo wrestling tournaments and artists like Claude Monet, Mark Rothko, and Agnes Martin. "And if the piece says to me, 'Do the change here,' I do it, and it's usually the right thing."

"I'm looking for a pleasing, calming sense in a painting," adds Holien. "Just a moment to take a breath and say, 'That's a beautiful place to be.' It doesn't mean there cannot be a lot of movement in the painting. It just means that the painting lets the eye rest and enjoy being there.

"I like a piece to be beautiful, but beauty isn't always a skinny model," she continues. "My feeling is: Any color goes with any other color. While they're not always part of the landscape, if you wait long enough, that color does show up." For example, in a series of patterned landscapes she did, the grasses weren't at all realistic—they were just lines—and the vegetation came out as dots. "I don't know what drives me to do some of the things I do in my paintings, but I just let it happen," she says.

Holien's fondness for patterns—of color, of shape and form—recalls the repeated lithographic images

CONTINUED ON PAGE 140

## "My feeling is: Any color goes with any other color."

# REALITY CHECK

## Six artists stretch the boundaries of realism in their abstracted landscapes

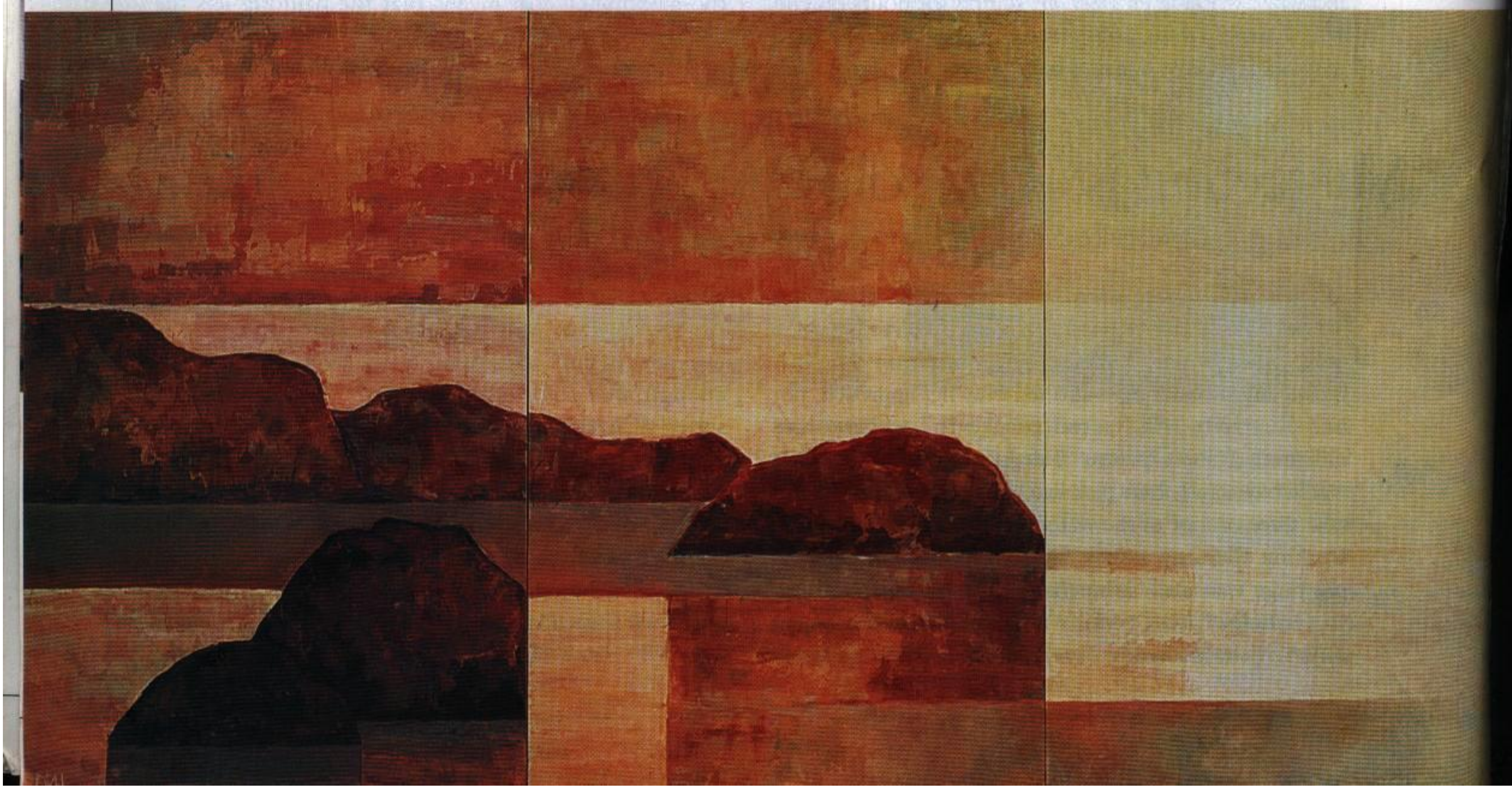
BY BONNIE GANGELHOFF

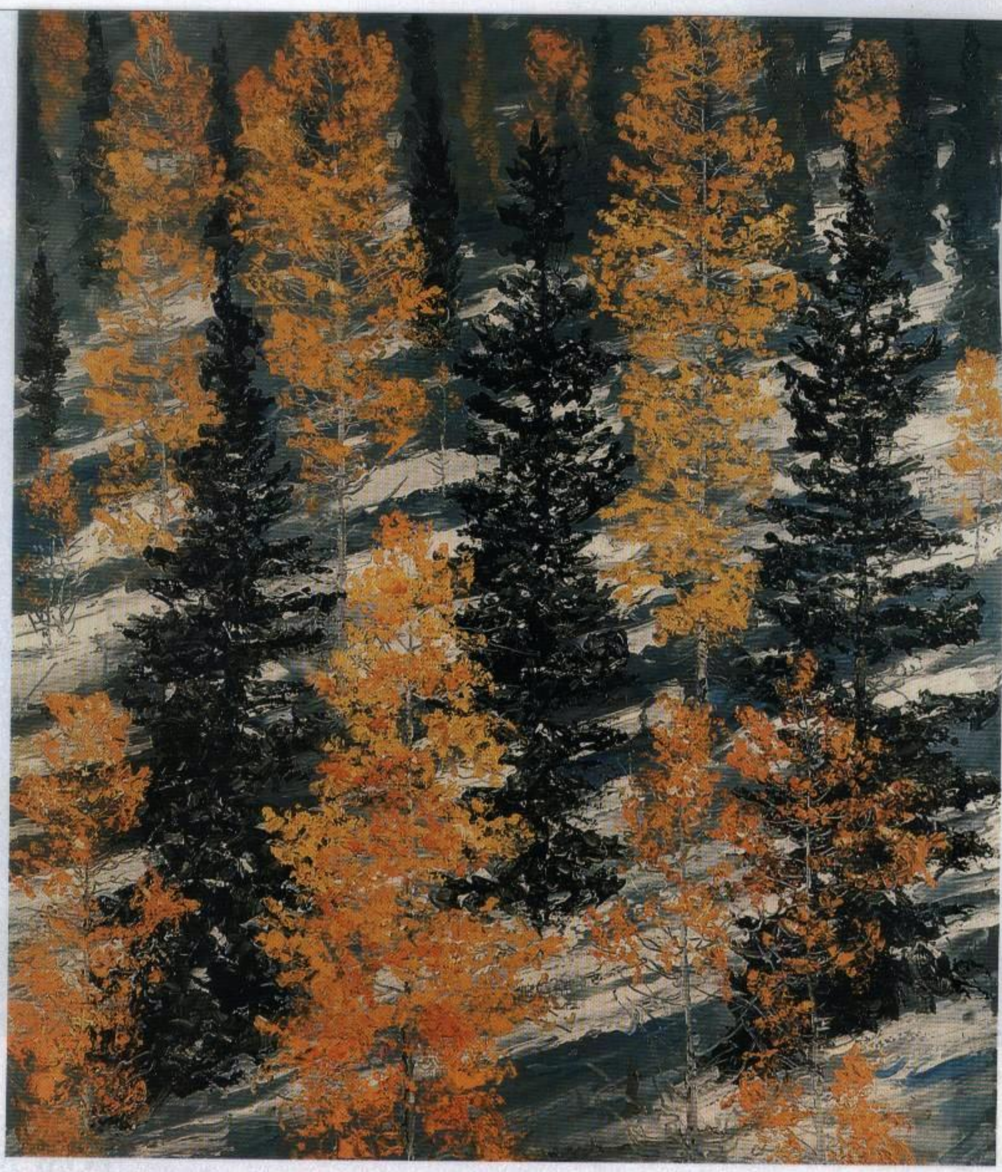
### DENNIS HARTLEY

Dennis Hartley is a man of many creative talents—architecture, painting, and designing furniture among them. The Oregon-based artist says that he approaches his abstract landscapes much like an architect, thinking of design as solving a problem or discovering the essence of a thing; his goal is always to come up with an elegant solution that is simple and powerful. Hartley's spare, graphic compositions speak to the less-is-more design philosophy often embraced by architects. "You struggle to put things in and then struggle more to take things out, all the time allowing for the painting to reveal itself in a spontaneous way," he says. "Painting is a less-controlled process than architecture."

Although he has always lived in the West, Hartley doesn't consider himself a regionalist. He is influenced by the colors, shapes, and designs of nature that mark the Northwest landscape but is equally drawn to works by early 20th-century modernists such as Paul Cezanne, Henri Matisse, and Edward Munch. While his palette may reference the grays, golds, and earthy browns of his home terrain, Hartley's abstracted compositions call to mind the blocks of color featured in works by Piet Mondrian. "Through abstraction I am trying to maximize the emotional impact of an experience through my use of color, form, and simple imagery," he explains. Hartley is represented by Freed Gallery, Lincoln City, OR; Selby Fleetwood Gallery, Santa Fe, NM; g2 Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ; and Morrison Gallery, Kent, CT.

ROCK, WATER, SKY: 3 PANEL, OIL, 30 X 55.





CLOUDCROFT—OCTOBER SNOW, OIL, 70 X 60.

## JAMES COOK

Arizona-based James Cook is often described as a painter who is in love with paint—the feel, smell, and color as well as the way it moves across the canvas. He is the first to agree and notes that, to some extent, all his paintings are about paint and how he can use paint to communicate, whether it's a scene depicting a natural wonder or a power substation. "The point is to energize the expression of whatever I am trying to say," Cook explains. "When I make a mark, I want it to feel like what I am seeing."

When Cook turns his artistic eye to nature, he often creates large-scale portraits of forests—clusters of aspen trees, for example, that dwarf the viewer and emanate a sense of being lost in the wilderness. They bring to mind the work of America's prominent 19th-century landscape painters such as Albert Bierstadt and Frederic Edwin Church. But Cook's use of paint has also been compared to the abstract expressionists. Unlike Mark Rothko and some of his artistic ilk, however, Cook offers a suggestion of reality in his work, walking the fine line between representational and abstract styles. Cook is represented by Cline Fine Art, Scottsdale, AZ; Davis Dominguez Gallery, Tucson, AZ; Meyer-Munson Gallery, Santa Fe, NM; Gail Severn Gallery, Ketchum, ID; Robert Steele Gallery, New York, NY; Dennis Morgan Gallery, Kansas City, MO; and Joseph Gierek Fine Art, Tulsa, OK.



SEA CHANGE, OIL, 52 X 46.

## DEBORAH GILLIS

Wilderness in all its splendor inspires Oregon painter Deborah Gillis. Although she lives in Portland, it's pristine wonders like the Columbia River Gorge that stimulate her artistic creativity. "Landscape painting is a personal investigation of our human connection to the natural world," she says. Gillis' artistic mission is to convey to the viewer an emotional sense of place rather than an exact representation. To achieve this goal, she often takes dozens of photographs at different times of the day and then selects an array to use as reference for her next work. "It makes the composition richer when you have a feeling that there is more than just this one time of day going on," she explains. "After all, nature is transitory."

Working in a loose, abstracted style affords Gillis the opportunity to be ambiguous about location. "It also allows the imagination to flourish," she says. "Viewers can take the painting where they want to go." In her paintings inspired by the Pacific Northwest, viewers may recall everything from a childhood home in Norway to a favorite vacation spot in New Hampshire. By exaggerating some details and downplaying others, Gillis' paintings inhabit the dreamy world between realism and abstraction, moving with ease between what is real and what is not. She is represented by Patricia Rovzar Gallery, Kirkland, WA, and Beppu Wiarda Gallery, Portland, OR.

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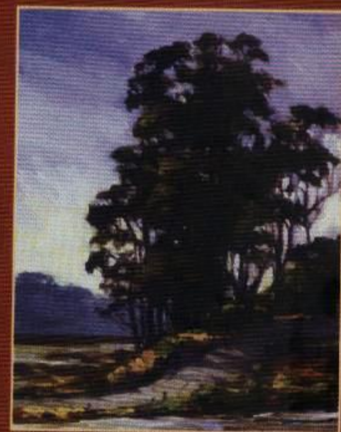
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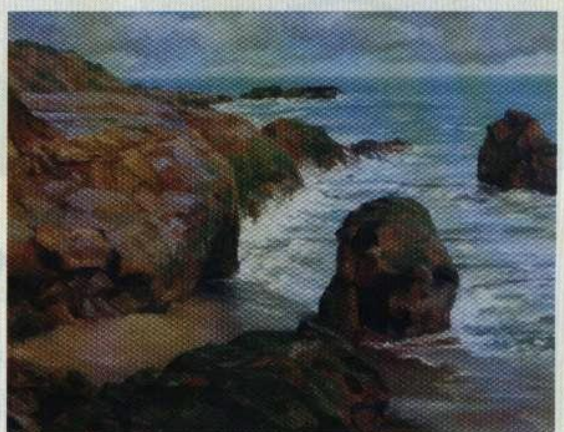


# "Rising Young Star"

## Exhibition Launched by California Art Club and Marston's Restaurant

In an effort to showcase the artwork of talented young Californians, the California Art Club has teamed with famed Pasadena eatery Marston's Restaurant to launch the ongoing series of "Rising Young Star" exhibitions. The first of these exhibitions featured Amery Bohling—one of the club's 32 mentor-program members—and ran from September 21 through November 13. The club's mentor program is made up of artists under the age of 30 who represent a new generation of California artists. Other artists featured in this exhibition spotlight are Stacy Kamin, whose work appeared November 2005 through January 2006; Jeff Ward, January through March; Aaron Westerberg, March through April; and Eric Merrell, whose work will appear May through June.

For more information on the California Art Club, visit www.californiaartclub.org.

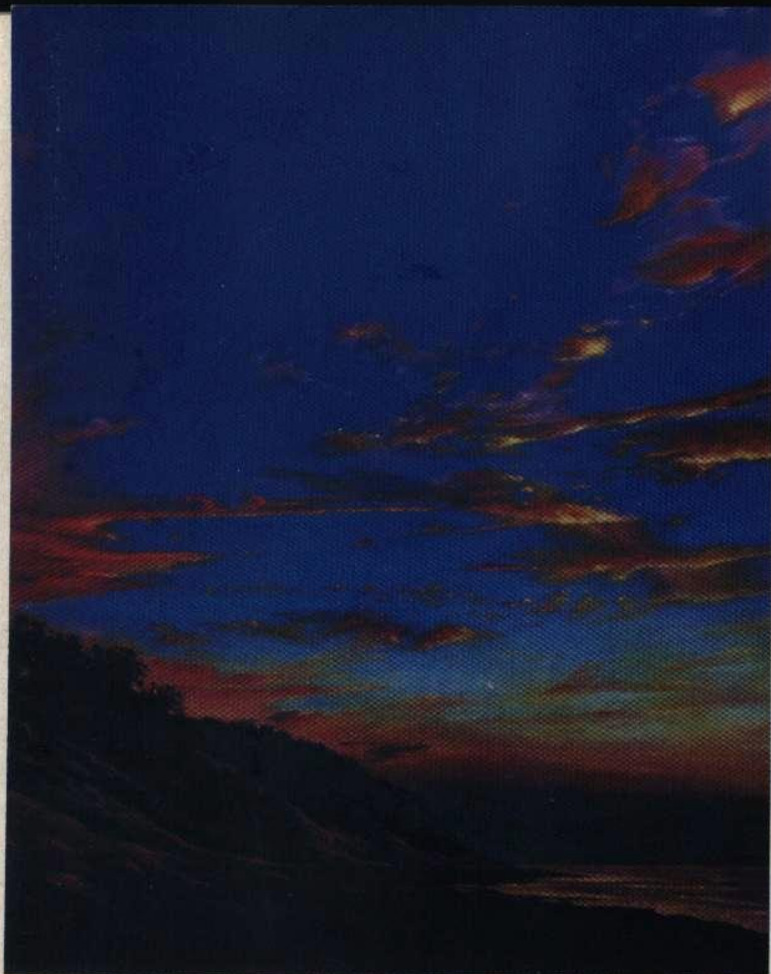




TOP
**Spring Eucalyptus**
by Jeff Ward, 2005, oil, 14 x 18. Collection the artist.

ABOVE
**Seaside Sculptures**
by Jeff Ward, 2005, oil, 11 x 14. Collection the artist.

LEFT
**White Roses**
by Stacy Kamin, 2005, oil, 20 x 16. Collection the artist.



## Mike Barret Kolasinski

**Until the Last Moment**
2003, pastel, 28 x 22.

Pastelist Mike Barret Kolasinski is widely respected for his landscapes that capture the drama of light at dawn and dusk. He calls these paintings "WildScapes" because they record "nature's dream come true: visual imagery expressed in brilliant light with shadows full of life. You are there, all alone, transported to a wildscape that paints no indication of human activity or influence," he says.

Kolasinski studied at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and Columbia College, also in Chicago, and is a frequent exhibitor in both solo and group shows. His pastel paintings have been included in juried shows organized by the Pastel Society of America, the Wichita Center for the Arts, the Southeast Pastel Society, the Pastel Society of New Mexico, and the Pastel Society of the West Coast.

For more information, e-mail the artist at mbkolasinski@earthlink.net.

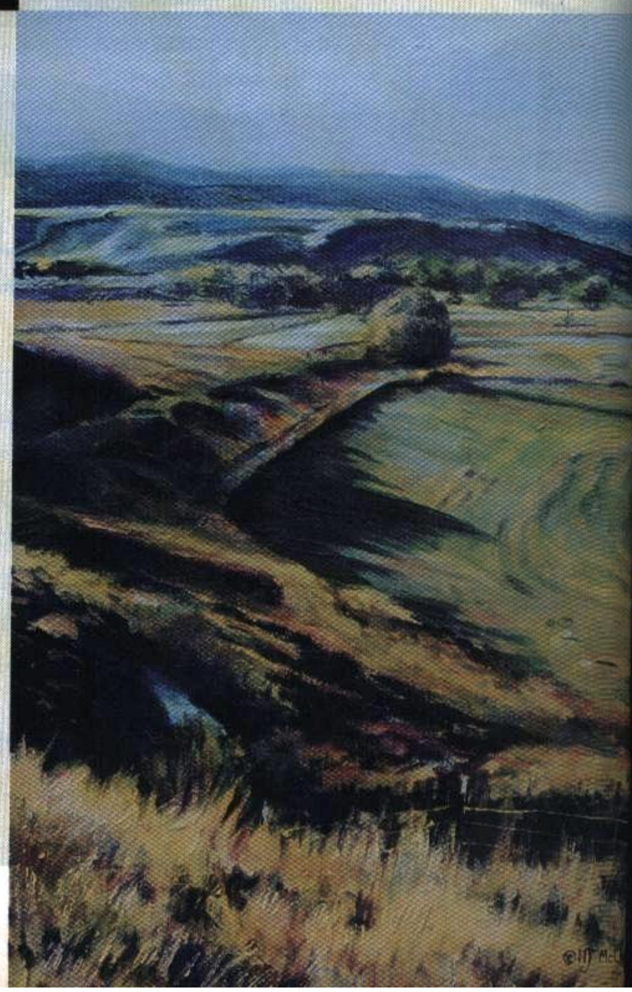
## Nancee Jean McClure

**From Meeker to Sleepy Cat**
2004, acrylic, 12 x 9.

This landscape depicts a county highway leading from the small northern Colorado town of Meeker to Sleepy Cat Mountain. "I took a photograph last autumn and used it as reference for the painting," says Nancee Jean McClure. "It's gorgeous country—high and abundant with wildlife and agriculture. There's a timeless quality of a freshly mowed hayfield that I love."

McClure has been an art teacher, educational consultant, writer, illustrator, and art director. She moved to Colorado a few years ago to start a company that provides creative and prepress services to publishers, and to devote more time to her artwork. She exhibits in Colorado with the Ouray Gallery, in Ouray, and with Frameworks Gallery, in Grand Junction.

For more information, visit the artist's website: www.nanceejean.com, or e-mail her at nancee@goodneighborpress.com.





## Alberta Geyer

**The Brass Cat**
2002, oil, 18 x 14.

Alberta Geyer was inspired to create this oil painting while gazing out her studio window at zinnias bathed in the warmth of a late-summer light. "I started assembling things in the studio that would help me capture the feeling of warm light, and a brass cat seemed like the perfect addition to that collection. I used vine charcoal to quickly mark the placement of the objects on the blank canvas, and then I laid in the lightest values and the areas of color intensity. Next, I moved on to the darks and background elements. Finally, I painted the foreground areas to achieve the light/shadow relationships and the chiaroscuro effect."

Geyer is a member of the American Artists Professional League, the Oil Painters of America, Academic Artists Association, and the New Hampshire Art Association. She is represented by Churchill Gallery, in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

For more information, call the artist at (603) 883-9240, or e-mail her at geyerab@aol.com.



## Dorothy A. Morgan

**Evening Hours With Tree**
2002, oil, 24 x 36. Private collection.
Photo courtesy John Pence Gallery, San Francisco, California.

South Dakota artist Dorothy Morgan first gained national attention for her oil paintings in 1987 through an art contest sponsored by *American Artist* magazine in connection with the publication's 50th anniversary. John Pence became aware of Morgan's work through that competition and began representing her in his San Francisco gallery. Since then her paintings have been included in exhibitions, reproduced in other national magazines, and acquired for many public and private collections.

Like most of Morgan's pictures, this landscape is based on a specific location near her home. "I am quite familiar with the tree shown in this painting, because I frequently drive past it and note its appearance in different seasons and at different times of the day," she explains. "After all these years of painting I am still motivated by the answer to the question, Is that paint glob a leaf or flower or tree, or is it to remain paint and have a life and energy all its own?" She adds that the image was painted on a cradled Masonite panel using palette knives and stiff bristle brushes.

For more information, e-mail the artist at jmorganh@itctel.com, or visit the John Pence Gallery website: www.johnpence.com.



**Ann Hurley Testa**
**Grapes on Fire**
2003, acrylic, 20 x 16.

Although California artist Ann Hurley Testa didn't study art in school, her childhood home was like an art museum because it was filled with oil paintings, watercolors, etchings, oil pastels, bronze sculptures, and ceramics created by her grandparents. Her grandfather, E.T. Hurley, spent 50 years decorating ceramics at Rookwood Pottery, in Cincinnati; and her grandmother, Irene Bishop, created watercolors, portraits in ivory, and Rookwood designs.

Testa developed this acrylic painting from one of the many photographs she sets up in her studio, building the layers of paint over a wash of cadmium red, which lent warmth and vibrancy to the painting. ■

For more information, e-mail the artist at anntesta@yahoo.com.



**Lap Dance**
2005, pastel, 18 x 24.
Private collection.



him design a composition. "I tend to start composing with the viewfinder," he adds. "I'm not a slave to the photo, though. I move things around and work from memory and imagination."

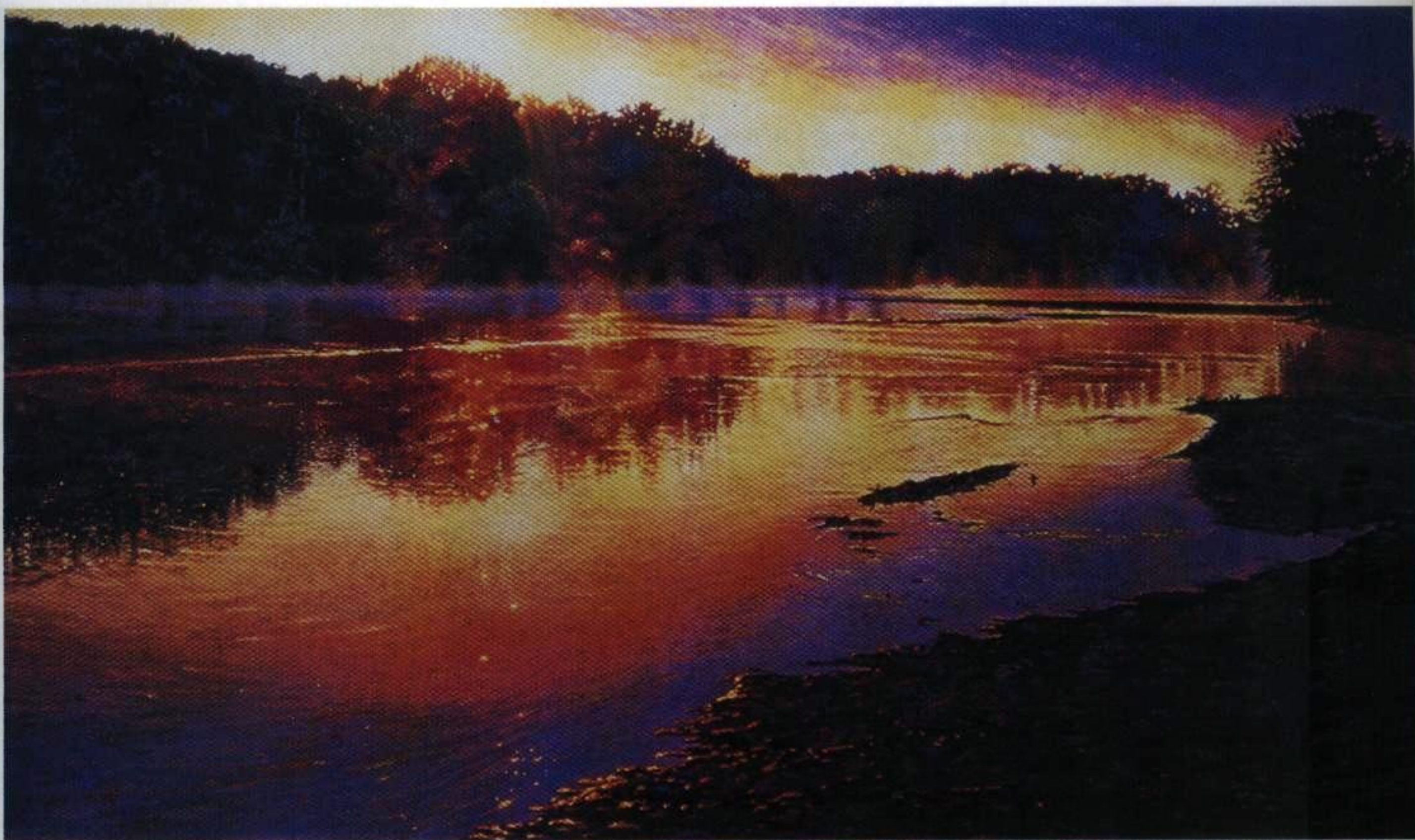
Next, the artist cuts a piece of archival foam board to the size he envisions for the piece, which varies widely, from extremely vertical—"like a slice"—to extremely horizontal. He is particular about the size and format of his images, saying, "In my mind the image has to be a certain way." He then mixes up a batch of Art Spectrum finetooth pastel primer, which has pumice already added, combining equal parts terra cotta and burnt umber. He dilutes the mixture with water before applying it to the foam board. This ground provides a warm middle-value undertone that works well as a contrast to the overlaying colors. He lets the ground show through in some areas, which adds "continuity and warmth," the artist says.

To begin laying in the composition, Kolasinski uses a dark purple Nupastel, establishing the major shapes and dark values. Then he works with a light-peach Rembrandt pastel to lay in the lighter areas and highlights. "I'm not concerned with color, just shapes," he emphasizes.

**"Without adding detail, I work with shapes within shapes, always seeing how they relate to the focal point."**

"Without adding detail, I work with shapes within shapes, always seeing how they relate to the focal point." Sometimes he covers the entire surface; other times he works from background to foreground or outward from the focal point. "I always begin in an area that I feel strongly attracted to and move to the areas around it," he adds.

After he has established the basic composition and value structure with the two pastels—one light, one dark—he begins to incorporate the local color. He generally has a palette in mind when he begins a new piece, selecting several pastels with which to begin and pulling out more as the work develops. "I may use 30 to 50 pastels by the end," he states. "I have hundreds of pastels, and I just pick out the minimum to start, then add more. At some point I stop adding more colors. I know I'm not going to go any further with the color, because if I did it would throw off the balance." Like most





TOP
**Lifting Spirits**
1998, pastel, 26 x 48.
Collection Wichita
Center for the Arts,
Wichita, Kansas.

LEFT
**Blaze of Glory**
2004, pastel, 24 x 36.
Collection the artist.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Tone Temple Violets**
2004, pastel, 18 x 34.
Collection the artist.



**"I do like to push the color, but I also see the scene in that way. In a fall setting, I see the golden yellows all the more. I see the colors in the shadow."**

Kolasinski most enjoys the final stages of his process, when he can embellish the lights and darks to make them more dynamic. "The fun part is in making sure the lights and darks create movement across the painting," he states. Paying special attention to the shadows, he often adds colors in a similar value that will make the area warmer and richer.

To protect these effects, the artist limits the amount of blending. Generally he blends with his finger only when he wants an area to appear flat. For the most part he prefers to allow the light to bounce off the pigment particles on the surface. In addition, he never uses fixative, which tends to darken and flatten the pastel. Instead, when he completes a piece, he leaves his rich darks as they are, giving the surface a good slap to dislodge any loose pastel dust.

The omission of the human figure—or any evidence of humankind, for that matter—is another way in which Kolasinski gives a voice to nature. "I won't even paint a farm scene," he says, "because in that case man has changed what nature can do on its own. I'm trying to make a personal statement about nature. If I make a figure or barn the focal point, the viewer will be drawn to that. I want viewers to see nature as if for the first time, to look at the landscape and how light hits it. I want them to see what nature has to say." ■

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*Lynne Moss Perricelli is the editor of* American Artist.

**Western Icon**
2002, oil on panel,
18 x 24. All artwork this
article private collection
unless otherwise indicated.



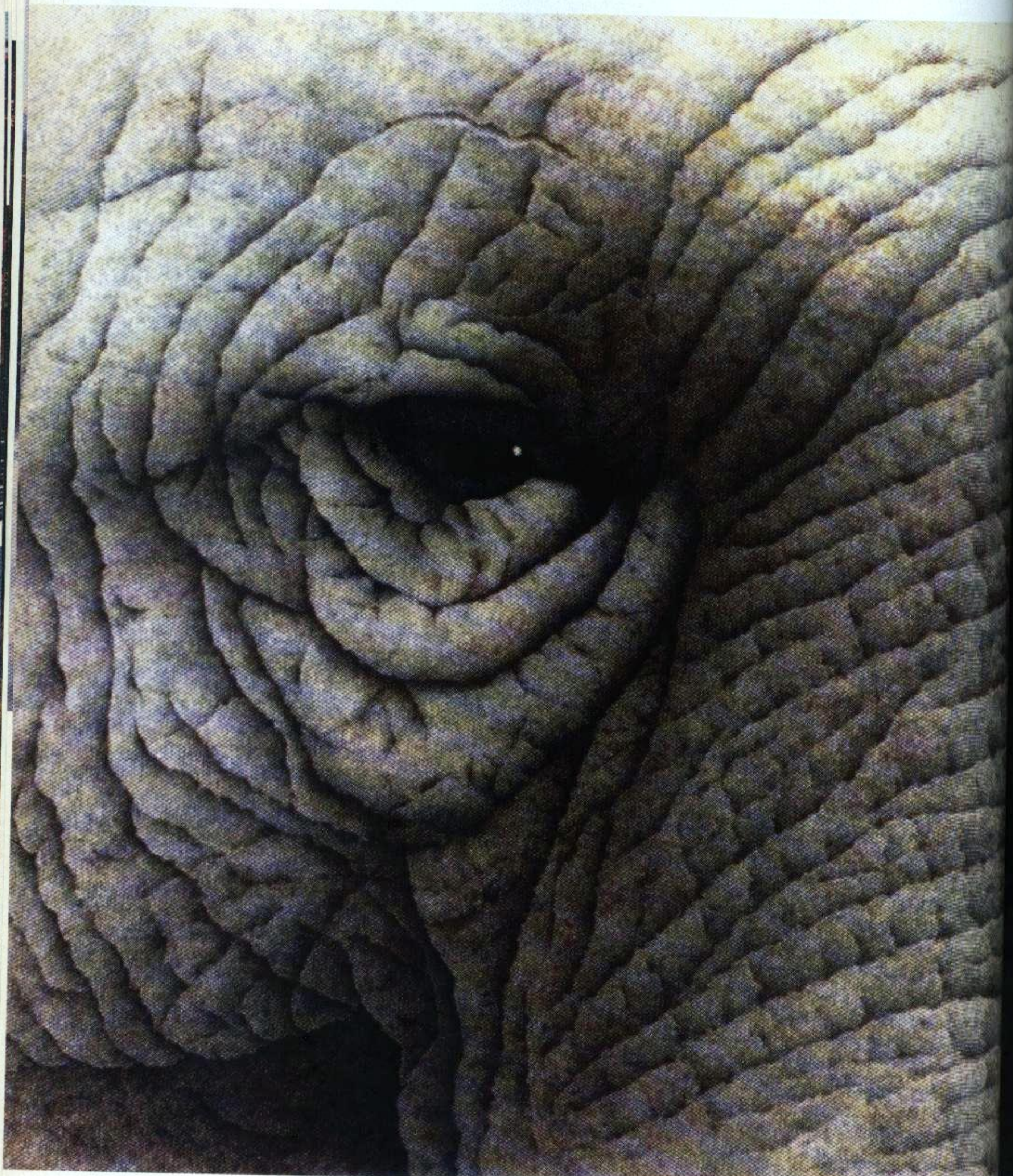


he says. "I am inspired by all kinds of art; there is so much art out there, especially in the museums, that is simply incredible. Why aspiring young artists don't just immerse themselves in it is beyond me. I am extremely lucky to have art museums such as the National Museum of Wildlife Art [in Jackson Hole, Wyoming], the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum [in Oklahoma City], and the Autry National Center [in Los Angeles] support and collect and show the greatest examples of Western and wildlife art, and make that art available to further its legacy."



Fascination with the distant and exotic American West dates to the mid-19th century, when artists such as Albert Bierstadt astounded the public with enormous, painstaking views of awe-inspiring scenery. So great was the

**Her Generous Regard**
2004, colored pencil, 14¼ x 16½. All artwork this article collection the artist.





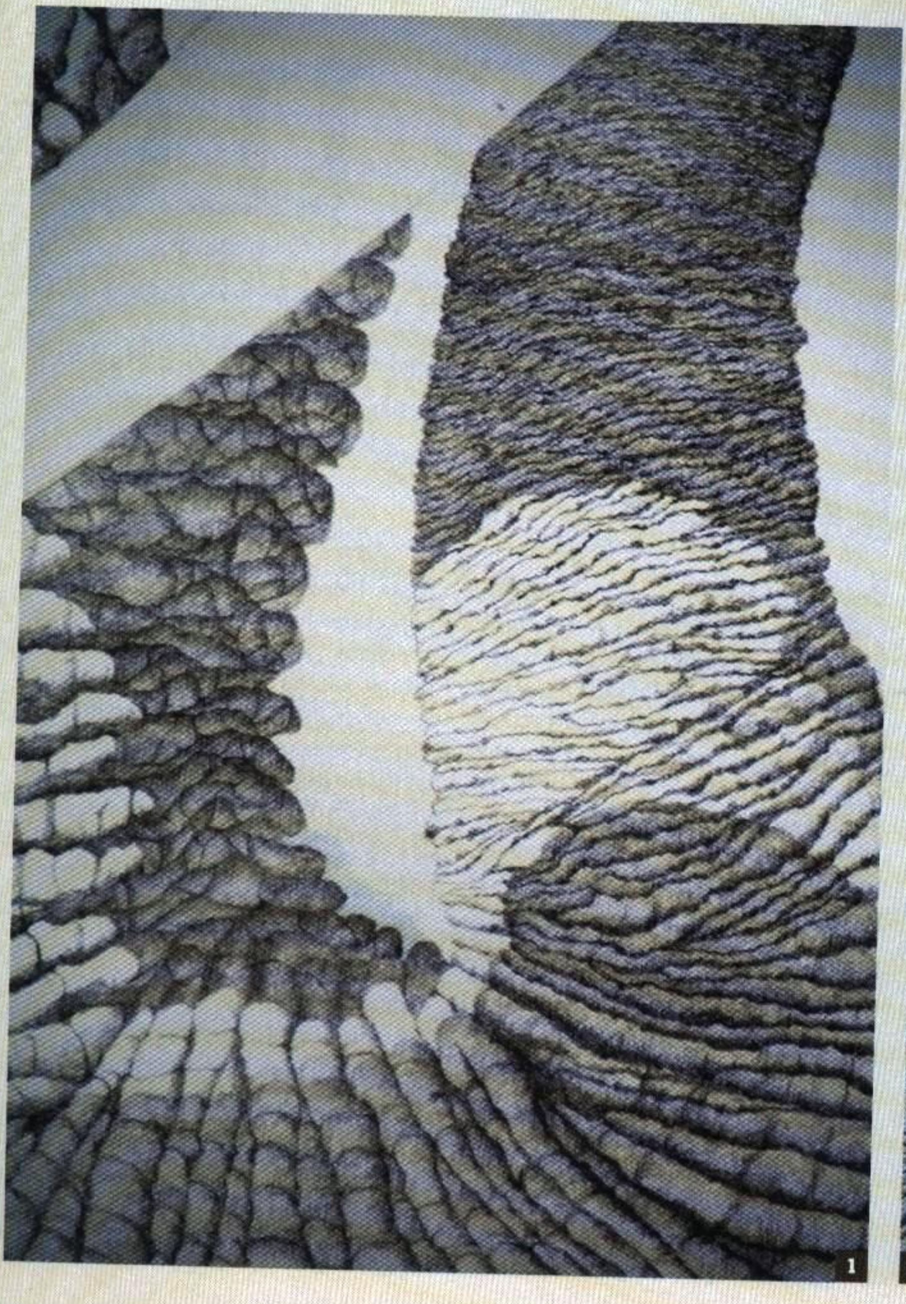
**Reference photo**



**Color study**



**Graphite sketch**



1



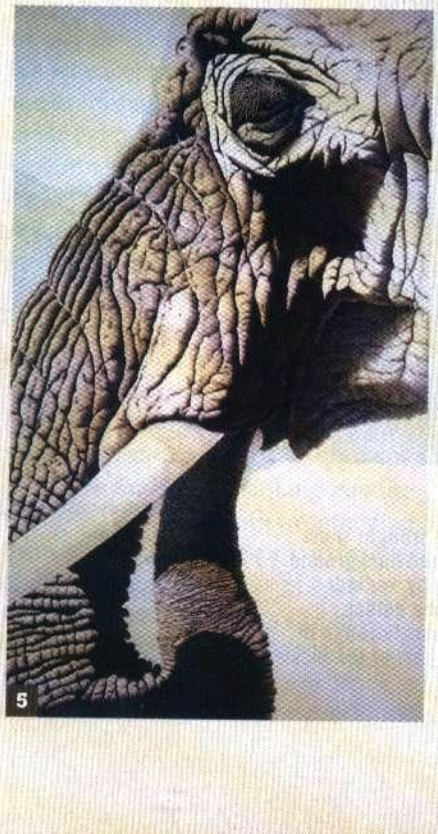
2



3



4



5

**Step 1**

Using photos as references, I began with many small graphite sketches, then made this half-size charcoal study. I traced and enlarged the study to produce a full-size, detailed line drawing. I also made color studies at this stage, which helped me find the glowing orange-brown effect I wanted.

**Step 2**

I started the grisaille by laying in the darkest color (dark umber). I made some changes as I laid in the dark values, including adding more wrinkles. I worked all over the piece. Even though I was just using one color at this point, there were few areas of flat color. Gradations and textures were beginning to define the structure of the elephant already.

**Step 3**

I continued to develop the grisaille. In a few places I added a bit of blue background color so that I could see how it interacted with the colors on the elephant. I drew the eyelashes in French Grey 10% and filled in around the individual hairs with dark umber and indigo blue.

**Step 4**

After I completed the dark umber grisaille, I added another layer of dark umber in the darkest shadows, bringing those areas close to their final values. In the rough areas, I applied color in random squiggles with pencils that were slightly less sharp, which made the colors seem to vibrate. In the smooth areas, I applied the color in tiny circles with an extremely sharp pencil. I also added sienna brown to many of the edges and areas of reflected light. At this point I assessed the composition and decided to emphasize the lines that curve away from the edge of the paper, because I wanted to control the path of the viewer's eye.

**Step 5**

I continued to add sienna brown in medium-value areas such as the top-right corner. I also added the final layer of dark umber in the deepest shadows and wrinkles. I removed my glasses for this part of the process so that I could see the individual flecks of pigment as they combined and filled the valleys of the paper.

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*For another step-by-step demonstration by Do Mi Stauber, visit the Online Exclusive section of the* American Artist *website.*

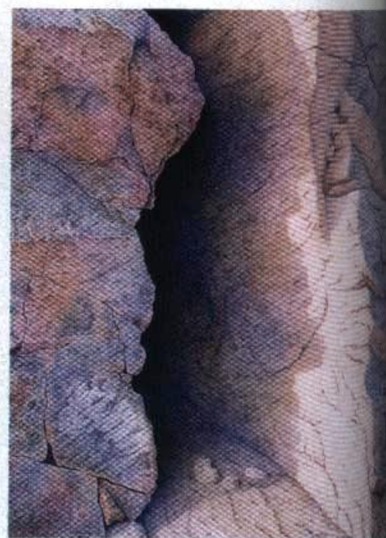


**Step 6**

I applied light umber to the lightest areas and brought them to completion. I added Mediterranean blue to the background. Finally, I adjusted the color in the background by adding peacock green, which contrasted better with the golden browns. Other adjustments included using mineral orange in the highlights and cream and bistre in the light part of the tusk.

THE COMPLETED DRAWING:
**The Landscape of Patience**
2004, colored pencil, 35 x 20.

composition, value, and color sketches. Sometimes I even make a clay model of the subject so that I can see how many design changes will affect the light and shadows. Next, I do a half- or full-size freehand value sketch in charcoal. In charcoal I can lay in and erase masses of dark and light, changing shapes easily until I am satisfied with the value composition, which I find most important. Once I've completed the charcoal sketch, I trace it (and enlarge it if necessary) to make a full-size, detailed line drawing. I then trans-



fer the line drawing with faint graphite onto a sheet of Stonehenge paper using a light box, and erase the graphite as I add color. More of the composition process takes place at the grisaille stage, as I repeatedly step back and adjust the values that are the scaffold of the piece. The grisaille then guides me as I fill in the other colors.

I work with a limited palette for each piece, choosing colors before I start the painting in an exploration process that is part intellectual and part intuitive. I always use a rich dark, such as indigo blue, black cherry, black grape, dark green, or dark umber. I use complementary colors in shadows; adding indigo blue to a dark-brown shadow, for instance, yields indescribable richness. From those beginnings explored with the colored pencils, I look for interesting color combinations. My colors do not necessarily reflect the local color of



ABOVE
**To Find the Stone-Encircled Place**
2002, colored pencil, 10½ x 14.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Toward Haven**
2001, colored pencil, 18 x 15.

the subject; I strive for a balance between realism and expressiveness.

**Process and Materials**

I work on Rising Stonehenge paper, a soft printmaking paper that will take many layers of pigment. I work with Stanford Prismacolor and Faber-Castell Polychromo colored pencils and use only pencils tested as lightfast by the Colored Pencil Society of America.

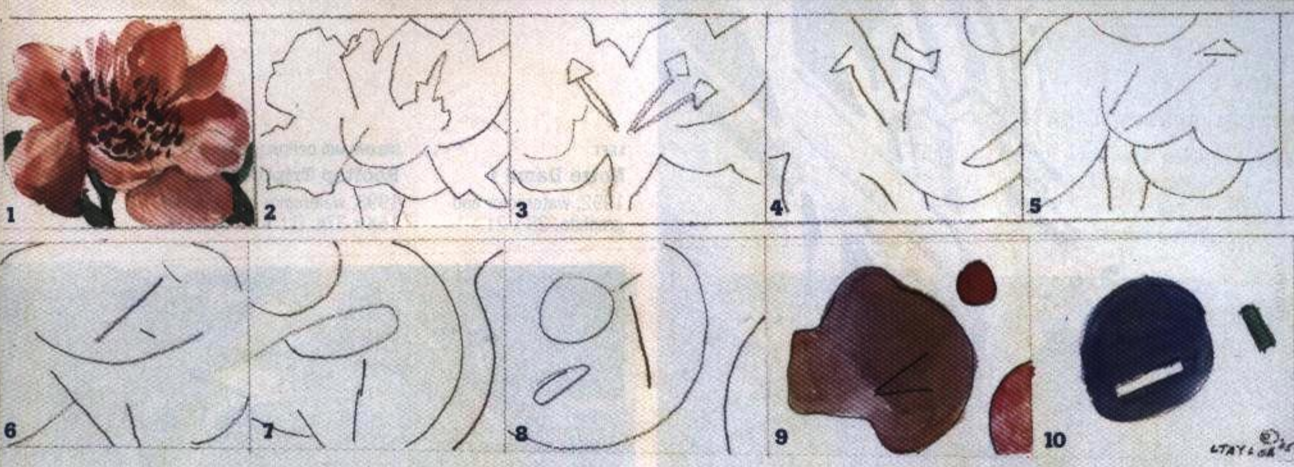
With very sharp points, I work slowly, gradually building up many layers of color. I usually start with a grisaille of my darkest color or colors, laying in the values before adding other colors. I often change the composition as I add color and therefore start with very light layers even in the darkest places.

I vary small strokes, depending on the texture I want. In very smooth areas, I use a tiny circular movement of the pencil point so that no lines are visible. In very dark areas, this stroke fills in the valleys of the paper so that no white shows through. In rougher areas, such as the lighter parts of an elephant's skin or an uneven rock surface, I use a small "squiggle" stroke. Colors overlap and fill in next to one another so that new colors are achieved both by blending and juxtaposing pigments. Even at the smallest level, I am always making expressive marks, feeling the curve of a plane toward the light, the roughness or smoothness, softness or hardness of the surface.

I often find myself sinking into the texture of the paper, with my attention focused on my pencil point, marveling at the beauty of the flecks of color as they combine. And every once in a while a wonderful thing happens: I feel as if I am stroking the elephant's skin or the tree bark with my pencil. ■

## About the Artist

**Do Mi Stauber,** of Eugene, Oregon, has studied with Barbara Benedetti Newton and Pat Averill, among other colored pencil artists. A member of the Colored Pencil Society of America, she has participated in numerous shows and won many awards, including the Stabilo Fine Art Pencil Award for Excellence at the Colored Pencil Society of America Annual International Exhibition in 2003. Stauber teaches classes and workshops. For more information, visit www.domistauberart.com or send e-mail to Dstaub11@aol.com.




**Step 1**
The exercise begins with a detailed painting of a single flower.

**Step 2**
Next, Taylor eliminates minor details and draws the curves as angles.

**Step 3**
The artist zooms in on the center of the flower, simplifying the shapes, but the subject is obviously still a flower.

**Step 4**
She then eliminates more lines and reduces the negative space.

**Step 5**
Despite further simplification, the essence of the flower is still evident. Once again she curves the lines.

**Step 6**
The drawing has lost all sense of a flower. There is little negative space.

**Step 7**
Abstract shapes have become all-important.

**Step 8**
Taylor has distilled the flower to an abstract design of four curved and two straight shapes.

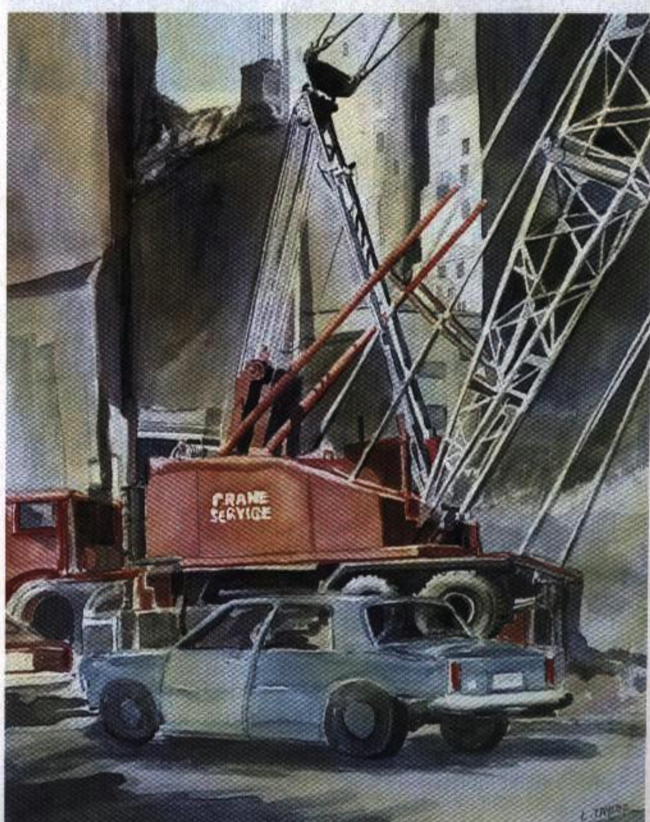
**Step 9**
Abstract forms of various sizes, shapes, and colors float in negative space.

**Step 10**
In the final reduction to three shapes, even the colors of the original flowers have been transformed.

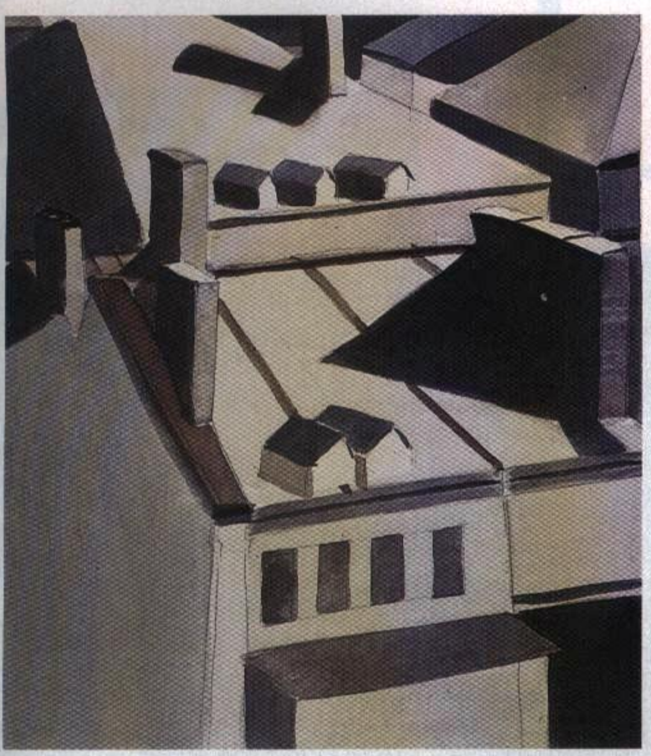
like this, and it might lead you to take more chances. Remember this exercise when you're doing your regular painting; you'll think with a broader brush. Or you can consider this simplified form as an underpainting and work over it. You should save this with your other paintings," she insisted. (The house rule is that no one is allowed to throw out a painting before the class is over.) Asked what positive results came out of this exercise, one student immediately answered, "It makes you stretch." Another added, "I think a seed was planted."

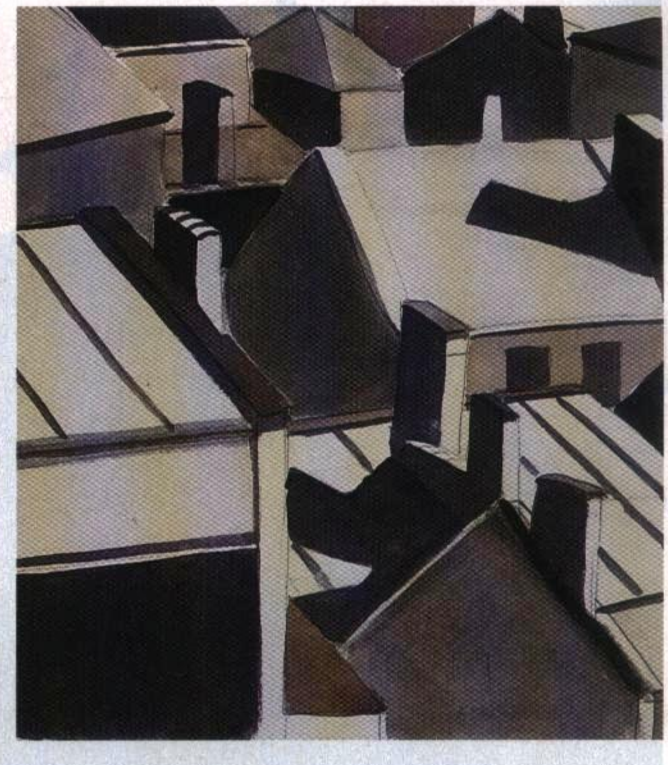
Taylor's teaching motto is "I want my students to move on, not stand still." To this end, she's developed various other exercises to stretch their minds and abilities. Her university students are required to write an artist's statement. In printmaking classes they must provide written documentation on materials and processes. Taylor, who believes firmly in the importance of studying art history, has one exercise she finds particularly valuable for all her students: write a two-page paper on an artist they admire, then take the properties of that artist and incorporate them into their own work. Working from a print, they break the painting down, figuring out the construction and palette, listing all the techniques they uncover in a sketchbook. Georgia O'Keeffe, she notes, is a good artist to study for learning simplification—blowing up an image, cropping, then distilling.

Another class exercise, Small to Big, starts with every



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*For an additional gallery of paintings from Lucy Taylor, visit the Online Exclusive section of the* American Artist *website.*





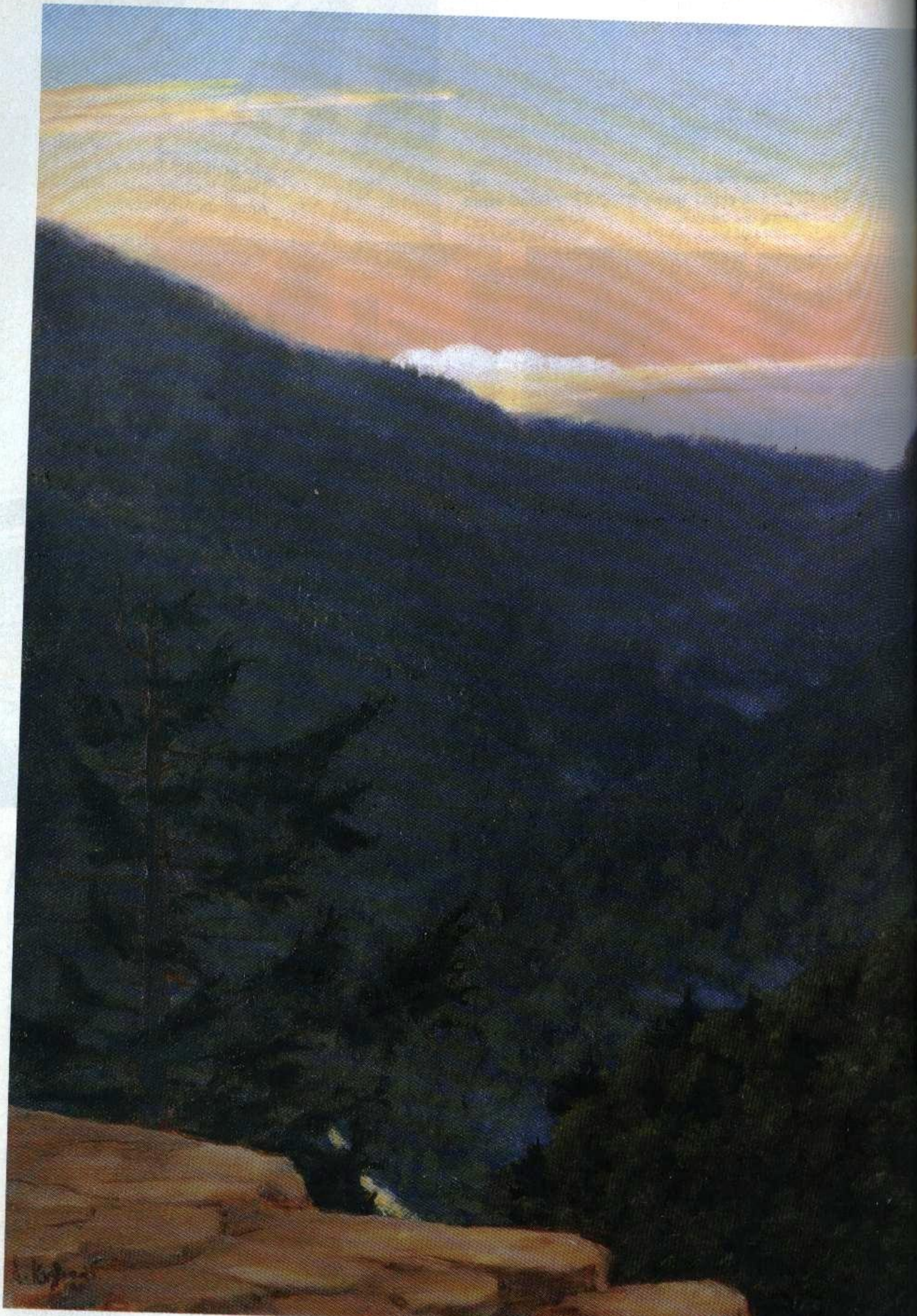
**Taylor's teaching motto is "I want my students to move on, not stand still." To this end, she's developed various other exercises to stretch their minds and abilities.**

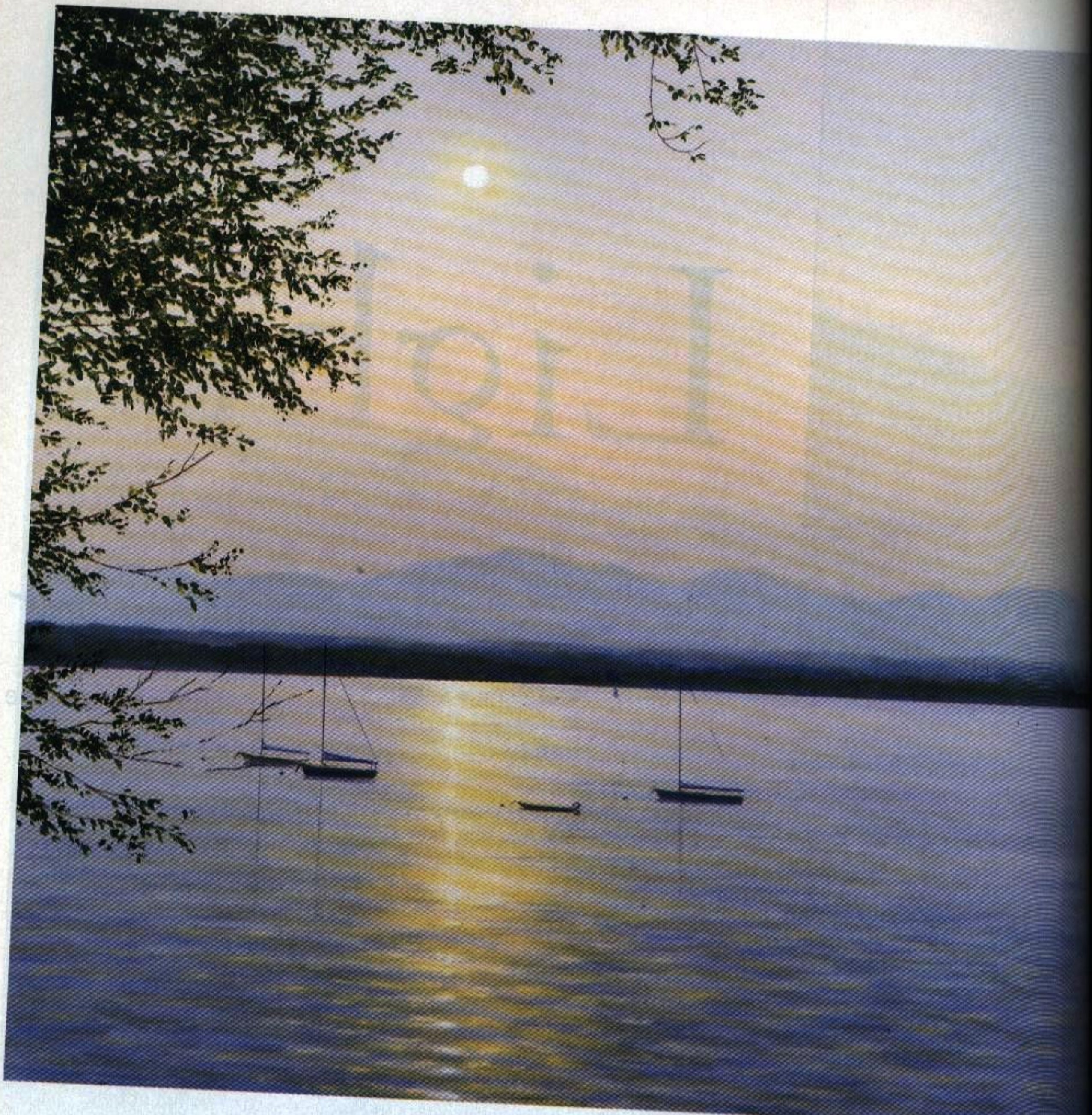
that also explains why I stopped at that building." What she's looking for is a good abstract design with a variety of edges and divisions of space. "I'm conscious of big shapes versus small shapes and the need to establish a dominant shape and dominant color. It should be balanced, yet a bit off-balance. Something must be in conflict with the dominance."

Back in the studio, having chosen her composition, Taylor starts with a very detailed drawing that may take up to four hours to complete. "Once I have that down, I get over it," she says. "I may draw every line, but I don't hold myself to every line. I try to work out the angles closest to me with a ruler, then I eyeball the rest. You must get the building nearest to you in correct perspective. Architects buy my work," she says, then adds with a laugh, "but one told me that my buildings would never stand. They aren't architecturally sound.

"Once I get to the painting part, that's the easy bit," says Taylor. After sponging down both sides of the 140-lb Arches cold-pressed paper and placing it on a sheet of Plexiglas or hardboard, she lays in an underpainting with a 1½" or 2" brush, working from top to bottom, light to dark. These washes set the mood for the painting and establish the soft, dark areas. As the paper dries she begins her second stage: reinforcing the darks and middle tones and the softer details of the buildings. She puts in the shadow side first so she knows what she's dealing with. The third, and driest, stage is when she adds the details. After the work is completely dry Taylor begins her editing process but insists, "I won't pick at it forever. I never rewet the whole paper. I will rewet specific areas that need reinforcement. I want to keep the luminosity of watercolor. If I can't do that I'd prefer to begin again." Taylor takes one painting to the midpoint, then begins a second one that's a related scene so she can use the same palette. With two in the works, she says she is less apt to overwork one. ■

*Linda S. Price is an artist, writer, and editor living on Long Island, New York.*



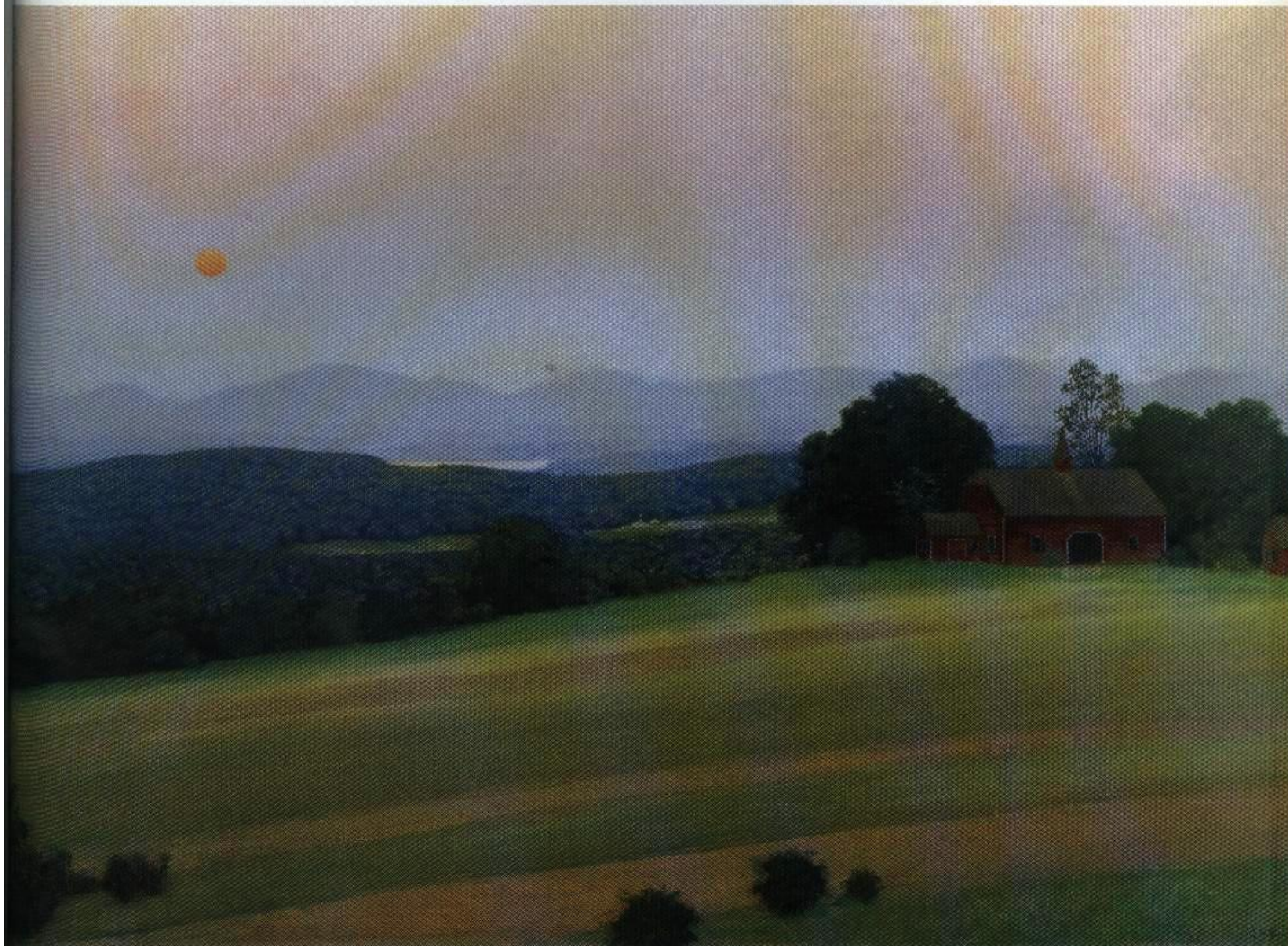


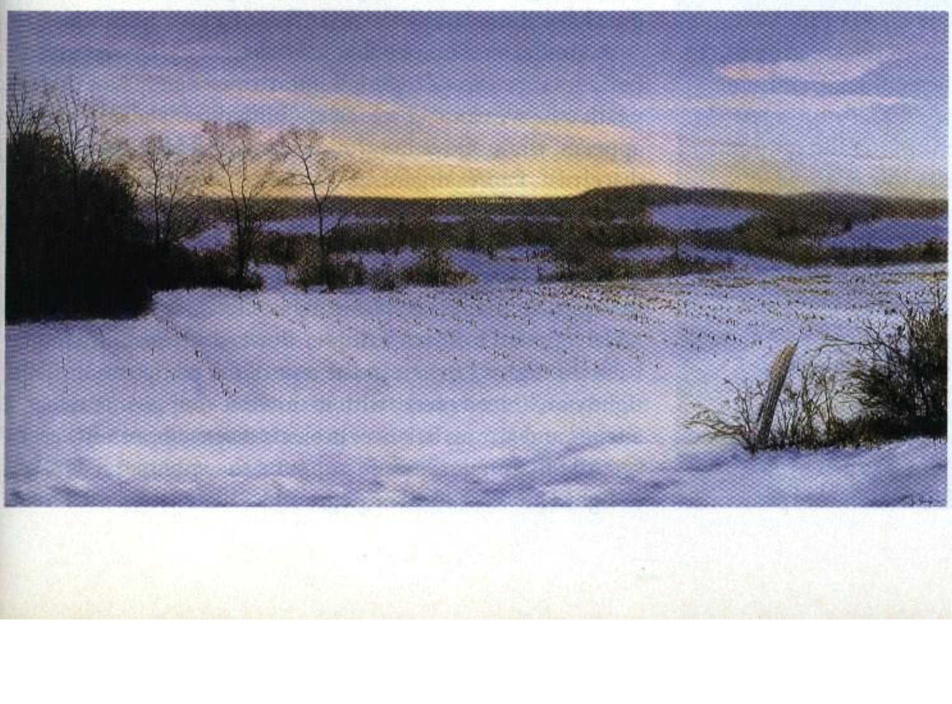
"My paintings are primarily concerned with light," he says. "Once I realized that I was painting light and not objects, then all things became possible." Keiffer's understanding of light—and how the play of light upon the landscape excites the imagination—is instinctive and intuitive. Nowhere is this more evident than in his painting *Platt Clove*. Here we look through a long valley lying deep in a haze of shadow cast by a setting sun. The thick forest-clad mountains and winding stream below proffer endless enchantments.

Keiffer has happily taken on the challenge of painting directly into the light. Aware that it may never be possible to paint an exposed midday sun, he revels in other difficulties, such as painting the light at sunset or exceptionally hazy conditions. In *Winter Sunset* a sky streaked with golden yellow is delicately reflected on the downward slope of snowy field in the foreground; while in *Hazy Sunset* a high-er sun, filtered through a heavy haze, produces a dazzle of gold on the limpid water beneath. The subtlest of color changes occur here in the gradations of the sky, from the palest blue at the top to its slight thickening into violets just above the distant mountain range.

In *Sunset Over the Catskills* Keiffer is even more adventurous, rendering the red ball of the sun as it drops behind a dense evening haze over the Catskills. Here the saturated red-orange of the sun plays against the dull red of a barn tucked against a copse of trees and the orange earth of the plowed field, while golden light bathes the foreground, and the distant, back-lit mountains drop into a murky and mag-ical series of indigos.

**Keiffer has a passion for the paintings of the Hudson River School, and his careful study of the work of its masters has enabled him to refashion their approach into a vision that has currency today.**





ABOVE
**Sunset Over the Catskills**
2005, oil on linen, 30 x 44.

LEFT
**Winter Dusk**
2005, oil on linen, 16 x 30. Collection the artist.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Hazy Sunset**
2004, oil on linen, 28 x 30. Collection Laura and Robert Foster.

**In our modern world, where development and pollution are endemic, Keiffer has discovered his own Arcadia, and makes us treasure it every bit as much as he does.**



In *The 4th of July, Seal Harbor* Keiffer presents another dramatic light condition. This sunset is almost extinct, surviving only as an orange bar on the horizon of the painting. Several rockets explode against the deep ultramarine of the sky, but the celebration is more delicate than grand. The light of the fireworks does little more than throw a few glints out onto the large, dark harbor in the foreground and only serves to make us more aware of the vastness of the natural world surrounding the scene.

Keiffer explores the dramatic effects of light emanating from a broken sky in *Fresh-Cut Hay.* Here a newly mown field falls away to a series of grassy hills and copses that progress toward a hazy mountain range. The sun shines in a strong patch in the middle distance, leaving the foreground and background in shadow. The alternating light and dark accentuate the drop in the space, a device well known to landscape painters, but here it is achieved with wonderful directness and clarity. The overall composition, with its zigzag regression, harks all the way back to the Italian High Renaissance painter Giorgione, but with all the charm initiated by the discovery of a new technique.

A similar excitement characterizes *Breezy Day,* wherein horizontal beams of light fall upon a vast sandy bay, underneath a heavy cloud cover. Deep in the far distance a squall appears, while above the clouds a peaceful blue sky can be discerned. Keiffer organizes this huge, open weather system and the raw freshness of the light it engenders into alternating shadows and lights to obtain a powerful sense of space.

Keiffer's focus on light carries over to his still lifes and interiors. In *Lizzie's Porch* sunlight falls on a bright-purple tablecloth and brilliant summer flowers, before suffusing back through a kitchen in the rear of the composition. This tightly organized piece, with its interlocking geometric shapes and strong balance, projects a sense of solidity and security that underlies and supports the ephemeral dazzle of light and color in the foreground.



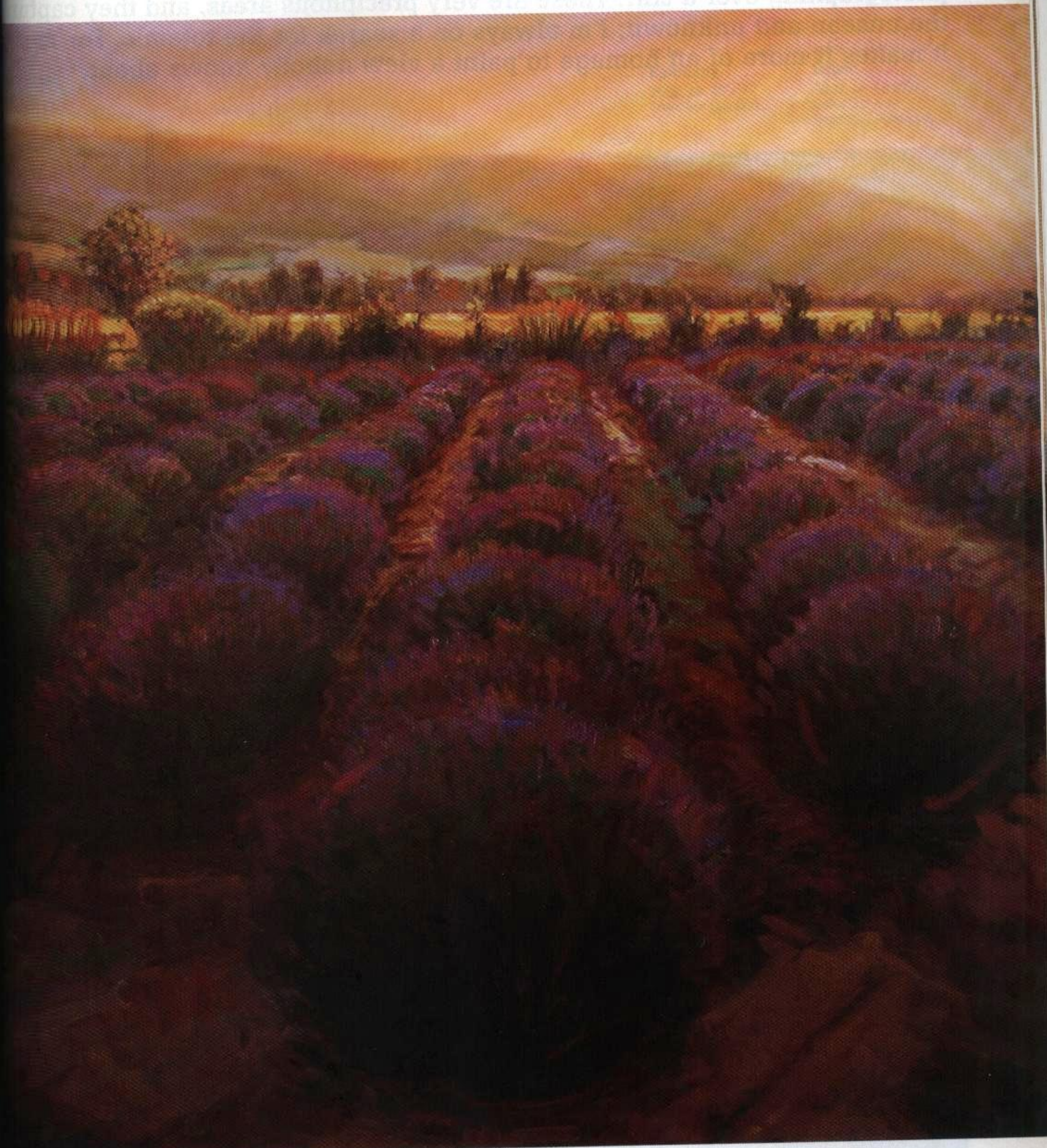
bristles, to develop textured surfaces on trees and grasses. Keiffer finds the best way to establish a luminous sky is to build up transitional layers of similar tones with a bristle fan brush. Achieving the appropriate richness and delicacy of such a sky generally takes him about four passes.

Like the works of his Hudson River School predecessors, many of Keiffer's paintings begin as plein air sketches. "I have found that 10" x 12" is the ideal size for this," he says. "It's a comfortable, boxy shape, not quite square, so you have to decide if you are going to do a horizontal or a vertical composition." Working quickly, Keiffer relishes the spontaneity and directness that emerges in these works. In *Mountains and Clouds—Sketch in the Catskills*, for example, he marvelously captures the transient nature of cloud wreaths as they play across a wooded ridgeline.

After returning to the studio with his sketches, Keiffer stretches a larger canvas and begins a more studied production. Like many landscape painters, he edits these sketches to create a more painterly and subjective composition—his own interpretation of the world. As did the painters he admires, Keiffer often adds or deletes objects, and invents considerable passages when transitioning from a sketch to a final painting. His considerable knowledge of art history helps at this stage, and he has equipped his studio with a wealth of art books. Masters plundered for compositional ideas not only include the Hudson Valley painters but also Cézanne, Corot, and Monet.

If Keiffer borrows from such masters, he does so with a certain unschooled charm that is perhaps reminiscent of the artist Fairfield Porter—another American painter whose lack of extensive formal training turned out to be an advantage in his career. Keiffer began his studies from an academic standpoint, choosing to study art history at Brandeis University, in Waltham, Massachusetts. During that period he also sought training in painting at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, in New York City, where he was encouraged to do abstract art. But although he admired the endeavors of such artists as Willem de Kooning, Alberto Giacometti, and Arshile Gorky, he found himself inclined to paint the visible world more directly. "I felt that you earn the right to stylize the appearance of reality only after intense observation of

**Elysian Fields**
2004, oil, 48 x 48.
Collection Nancy de Juan.



BELOW

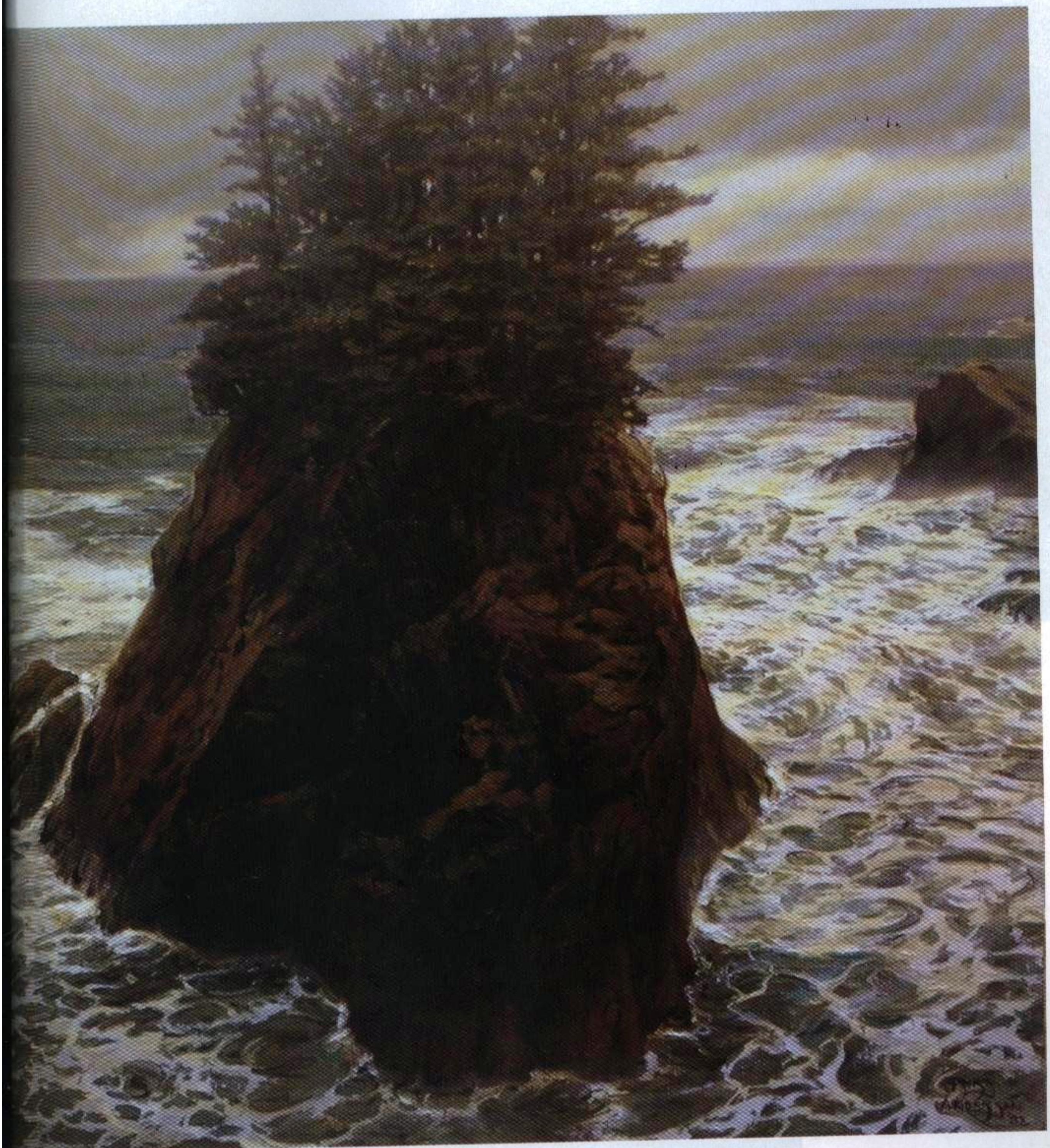
**Epiphany**

2002, oil, 48 x 72.
Collection Gus Diaz.

OPPOSITE PAGE

**Island**

2002, oil, 48 x 60.
Collection Ann
Bendinger Rundquist.





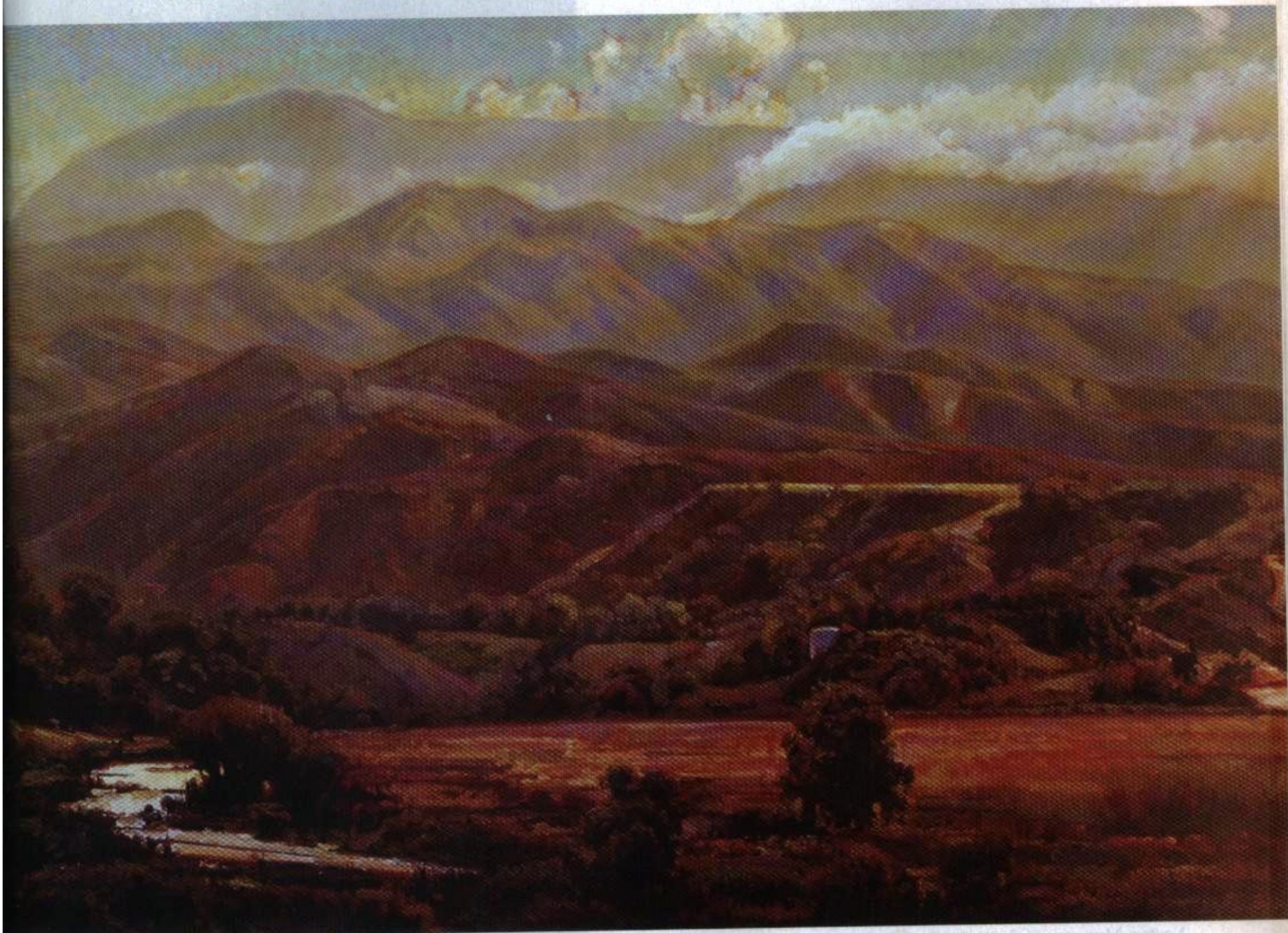
the undercolor to show through in pure Impressionist technique. When I have to mix oil pastels with oil paints, I do it on the palette, never on the canvas, because that can make the color muddy. The sky is always completed first, both for painterly and for practical reasons. The sky dictates the rest of the luminosity and chroma of the painting. These will often be painted in one shot to ensure a cohesive, dramatic sky. I can't paint water unless I have the sky that it reflects. I also work on the sky first because I don't like to paint with my hand resting on wet colors from the lower part of the painting." From this point on, Anderson works over the entire canvas, "orchestrating the various colors," as he puts it.

In *Epiphany*, a work that reflects the artist's interest in the constant movement of the ocean, Anderson finished the sky and then completed the rocks. "I saved the water for last because I love painting water," he says. "It's the dessert of the painting meal. First I applied a base of olive greens and bluish greens where the water was deeper, taking my time to get the colors exact. I let it dry until it became tacky and then painted the various whites over the top. The lower left has more bluish versions of foam because it's deeper water. Where the swell rises and there is more gnashing foam, I've added ochre. The upper portions of the foam are glazed with Indian yellow."

The artist employs a standard palette, although he relies upon no particular brand and prefers to work with synthetic brushes of various brands and sizes. Along the left-hand edge of his 12"-x-24" glass palette he lines up Indian yellow, Hansa yellow, cadmium red light, permanent rose, alizarin crimson, Indian red (instead of burnt sienna), raw sienna, burnt umber, and magenta. Along the top of the palette are phthalocyanine yellow green, permanent green light, phthalocyanine green, cobalt turquoise, cerulean blue, French ultramarine blue, and ivory black. He supplements his palette with Schminke cold grey and bluish grey 2.

Purples and greens frequent the artist's paintings because he finds the combination peaceful. Often he develops lush greens by adding Hansa or Indian yellow to a deep phthalocyanine green, and he varies the purples from bluish to reddish. On the final layer he will achieve a strong pop of color with burnt sienna. "It's this sort of wham of color that makes

"When I have to mix oil pastels with oil paints, I do it on the palette, never on the canvas, because that can make the color muddy."



people gasp," he says. "On *Terra Australus, No. 1* the reddish line above the horizon works against the yellow to create tension. This sort of zinger is what separates the work from the landscape and propels it into the realm of painting."

Anderson's typical painting day is four to five hours long, and a single, larger painting will often require three weeks of labor. These larger paintings are his status quo. "A small painting is like looking out a window," he observes, "while a large painting has an overwhelming presence. It allows me to stand up and be very physical with the paint." Beyond stretching his heavy Fredrix canvas, the artist finds that working large incurs no particular challenges. And because he works with thin layers, he says that a large painting does not require much more paint than a small painting. ■

*Christopher Willard is a painter, color theorist, and freelance writer who has contributed to* American Artist *and its quarterlies for more than seven years.*

## About the Artist

**Brooks Anderson** works out of Second Nature Studios, his own studio and gallery, in Santa Rosa, California. His paintings are in the collections of the Philbrook Museum of Art, in Tulsa, and the Seavest Collection of Contemporary Realism, in New York City. They are also featured in numerous corporate collections, including those of Citibank, in New York City and San Francisco; and Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, in Japan. One of Anderson's paintings was housed in a corporate collection in the World Trade Center, in New York City, and was lost on September 11th. The artist's work is recognized in *Spirit of Place: Contemporary Landscape, Painting and the American Tradition*, by John Arthur (Bulfinch Press, New York, New York). He is represented by Gwenda Jay/Addington Gallery, in Chicago.

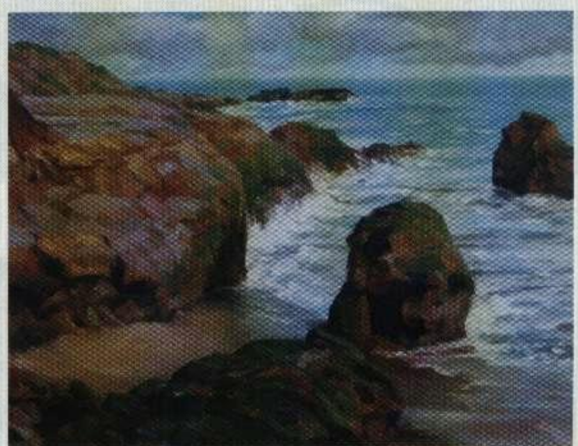


# "Rising Young Star"

## Exhibition Launched by California Art Club and Marston's Restaurant

In an effort to showcase the artwork of talented young Californians, the California Art Club has teamed with famed Pasadena eatery Marston's Restaurant to launch the ongoing series of "Rising Young Star" exhibitions. The first of these exhibitions featured Amery Bohling—one of the club's 32 mentor-program members—and ran from September 21 through November 13. The club's mentor program is made up of artists under the age of 30 who represent a new generation of California artists. Other artists featured in this exhibition spotlight are Stacy Kamin, whose work appeared November 2005 through January 2006; Jeff Ward, January through March; Aaron Westerberg, March through April; and Eric Merrell, whose work will appear May through June.

For more information on the California Art Club, visit www.californiaartclub.org.





TOP
**Spring Eucalyptus**
by Jeff Ward, 2005, oil, 14 x 18. Collection the artist.

ABOVE
**Seaside Sculptures**
by Jeff Ward, 2005, oil, 11 x 14. Collection the artist.

LEFT
**White Roses**
by Stacy Kamin, 2005, oil, 20 x 16. Collection the artist.





ABOVE
**Almost Sundown**
by Robert Coombs.

ABOVE RIGHT
**Under the Plum Tree**
by David Hettinger.

# Oil Painters of America Hosts 15th Annual National Juried Exhibition

Oil Painters of America held its 15th Annual National Juried Exhibition at the Dana Gallery, in Missoula, Montana, May 5 through June 24. Award winners were announced during the opening ceremonies, and total awards for the show exceeded $45,000. More than 1,000 artists applied for entry, and 200 were selected for exhibition. Robert Coombs was awarded the American National Award of Excellence, the show's top award, for his painting *Almost Sundown*. Other award winners included David Hettinger, Quang Ho, and Paul Mullally, who all won Awards of Excellence for Signature Members for their respective paintings *Under the Plum Tree*, *In the Studio*, and *Muse in Blue*.

For more information, visit www.oilpaintersofamerica.com.





ABOVE

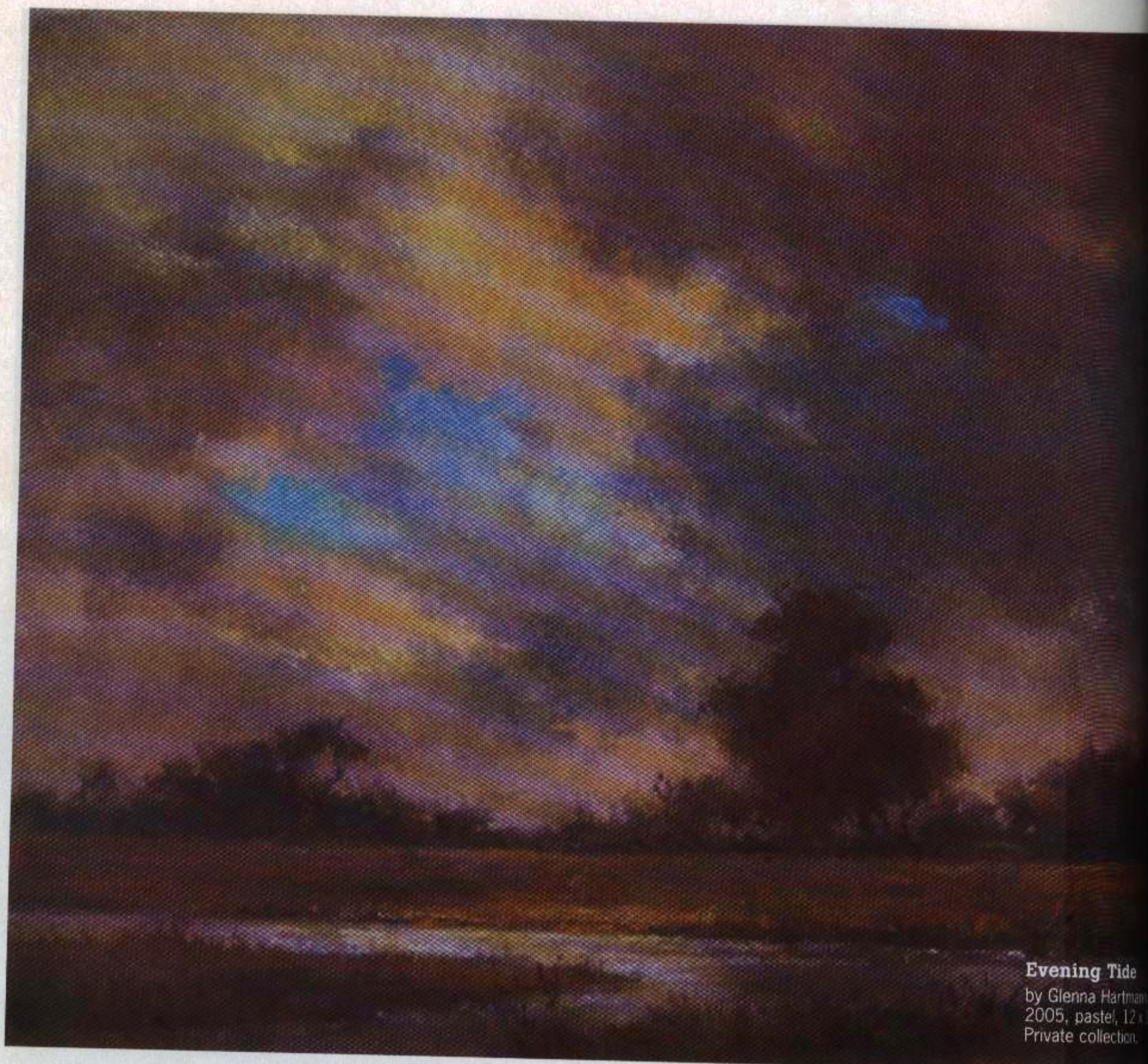
**Southeast Storm**

by Whitney Brooks Abbott, 2006, oil on linen, 30 x 40. Collection the artist.

LEFT

**Shining Sea**

by Marcia Burtt, acrylic, 10 x 18. Collection David Garabrant.



**Evening Tide**
by Glenna Hartman
2005, pastel, 12 x
Private collection.

"I think it's fantastic that I see all this open space here in Santa Barbara County—open to anybody who wants to enjoy it." —Marcia Burtt

venues for which they sign up in advance. Areas across the country are filled with similar spaces. Local art-organization buildings, museums, and libraries, as well as restaurants, cafés, and shops, are just some possibilities.

One of the many advantages of being a part of The Oak Group, Burtt laughingly notes, is that "The Nature Conservancy thinks I'm some sort of god. I guess that's what happens when you donate several thousand dollars or more per year." Despite the fact that Burtt says she's "not a high roller," what the group has managed to is something special. "It's great in three ways: If the land does eventually get built upon, you have all these paintings that are a r of it. Second, you make the public aware of how beauti is, and each person who buys a painting gets a piece of Third, the person who buys the work gets the satisfacti knowing they're helping to support open space. I think fantastic that I see all this open space here in Santa Ba County—open to anybody who wants to enjoy it."

Tello relates a statement written by Ray Strong, a foun member of the Oak Group and a mentor to many of the artist-members: "To me, The Oak Group's purpose is to p serve open-air spaces and prevent overdevelopment of th land. We want to preserve nature and to envision it so th can share our experiences and nature's beauty with other now and in the future. We have developed together as ar and conservationists, reaching—like the oak—within the earth and simultaneously outward, as we share our perso experiences of the land with our fellow human beings."

*Edith Zimmerman is the editorial assistant of* American Arti



LEFT
**Corset**
2005, oil on linen, 38 x 24.

BELOW
**The Scale**
2003, oil, 34⅛ x 28. Courtesy Spanierman Gallery, New York, New York.

BOTTOM
**Water Street Hallway 2**
2002, oil, 15 x 19⅜.





Atelier had a wonderful atmosphere." It is through Collins' active support that Lehman now finds herself exhibiting at the prestigious Spanierman Gallery, in New York City.

Painting on double- or quadruple-primed linen, Lehman begins a picture with a thin wash in a transparent brown oxide made by Mussini, which she cools slightly by adding a small amount of helio green deep. "It's a sketch, but quite a full sketch," she says. The color is placed in the shadows while the whites are left open so that by the time the artist has finished sketching, the entire piece is rendered in monochrome. Once this underpainting is dry, Lehman begins to work in color using a combination of bristle and synthetic sable brushes. She has a delicate touch and applies the paint thinned with turpentine and oil to create a spare and somewhat transparent appearance, particularly in the shadows. The underpainting makes its presence felt, looming under the cools of shadows to create a sense of depth and solidity. Working with thousands of small touches, Lehman enjoys exploring the subtle shifts of




**Coca-Cola (My Studio) (detail)**
2004, watercolor, 25 x 26. Private collection.

BELOW
**From Chinatown With Love**
2006, watercolor, 29 x 39. All artwork this article collection the artist unless otherwise indicated.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Roussillon, France**
2005, watercolor, 16 x 20.



### Tool No. 1:
### Don't Be Stingy With Paint

The No. 1 reason watercolorists fail to realize their full potential is that they simply don't give themselves enough paint to work with. They end up thinning small dabs of paint with too much water, pushing the limits of a few tube colors, or missing the chance to vary the range of colors they see in a subject.

I recommend artists have at least 1 heaping tablespoon of paint in each well of a palette, and I also suggest that they have a warm and cool version of the primary colors arranged logically in those wells. After each use, the artists should also clean the mixing area and replace the lid so the damp color doesn't dry out. When they are ready to paint again, they can spray each well with water so the paint is reconstituted. Tubes of paint may be expensive, but the paint is never wasted.

One of the challenges of painting is seeing color differently, and that's not possible if an artist doesn't have pigments to match his or her observations. I help my students see the variety of greens, browns, blues, reds, yellows, and grays in their subjects; but if they only have the cheap colors sold in standard sets, they will struggle trying to express what they observe.

### Tool No. 2:
### Give Yourself Enough Room on the Palette

The size of a palette matters. Those six-inch round palettes have wells that are too shallow, a mixing area that can only handle one color at a time, and no lid to keep the paints moist between paintings. The best palettes are the 12"-x-16" square plastic palettes with 22 deep wells, separate mixing areas, and a lid; the Stephen Quiller round palettes with 24 wells; or other bran of palettes that have room for an ad quate amount of paint and areas to mix them without contamination.

I also recommend that students write the color names in each well along the edge of the palette using Sharpie marker so they will becom more familiar with the names and always work with the same arrange ment. After a while students will instinctively know where each color located just as they know to find the letters on a computer keyboard.

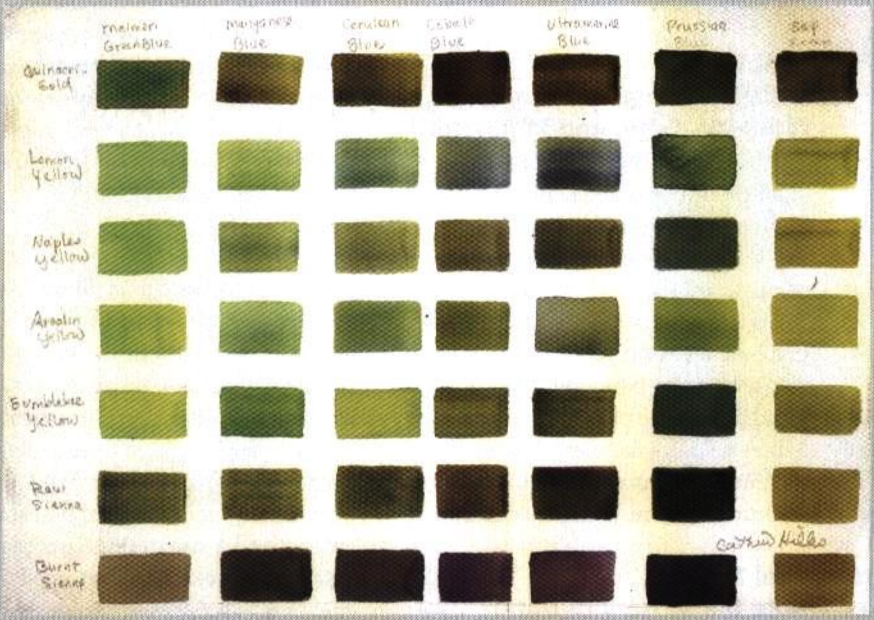
### Tool No. 3:
### Work on Professional-Grade Paper

Watercolor paint will not flow in th same manner and will not be as ef tive when applied to inexpensive or inappropriate paper as it will on pr fessional-grade watercolor paper. I cannot stress that point enough. Ju as the chefs in a four-star restauran insist on quality ingredients, artists must also use good-quality cotton-r paper to get the maximum perform ance from their brushes and paints

### Tool No. 4:
### Start by Prewetting the Paper

Most recommended painting tech niques start with the application of in-wet washes that establish a light transparent value and soft color tran tions as a foundation for what will f low. Those depend on prewetting th paper by bathing it in a tub of water selectively brushing on clean water specific areas of the paper. The mor water applied, the more saturated th paper will become and the more siz will be removed. A saturated sheet remains damp for a longer period o time, and it loses some of the sizing that keeps brushmarks sharp; when the isolated areas of wetness dry qu ly but retain enough sizing to hold crisp edges. Before you begin paint





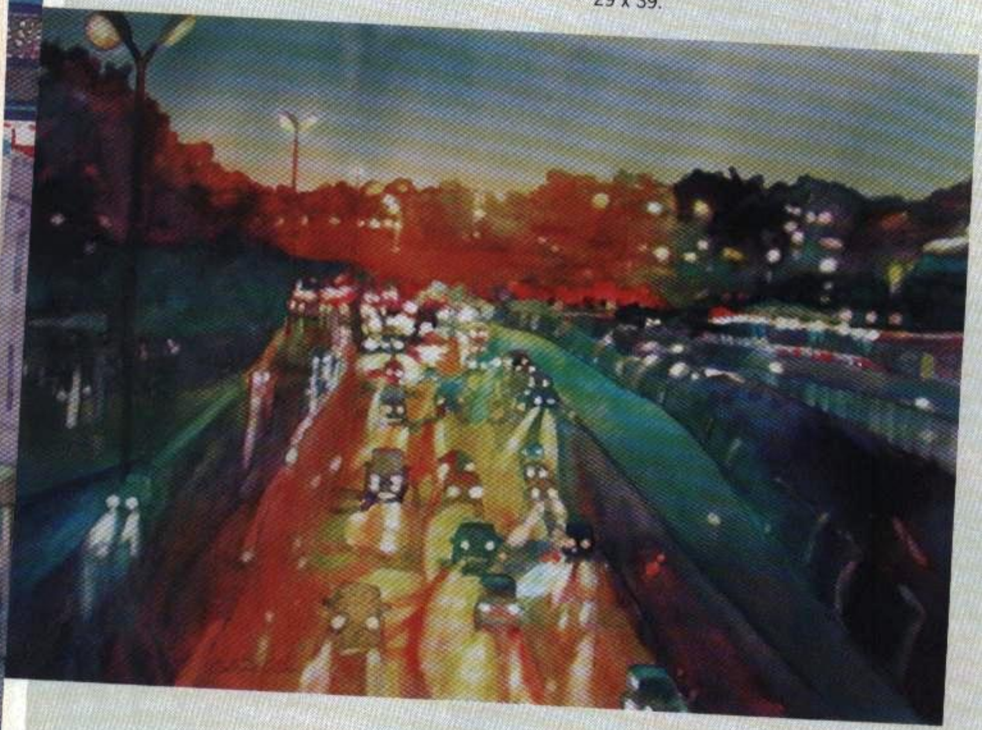

## Hillis' Instructional Color Chart

To encourage students to work with a wide range of pigment combinations, Hillis advises them to prepare a chart of painting values and color mixtures, such as the green-mixture chart shown here.

BELOW
**Easy Street**
2005, watercolor,
22 x 28.

OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE
**Worshipful**
2006, gouache,
22 x 28.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BELOW
**The Three Amigos**
2005, watercolor,
29 x 39.



ask yourself if you intend to use a wet-in-wet technique, a wet-on-dry application, or a pure drybrush approach.

### Tool No. 5:
### Don't Drown the Pigment

Learning how much water to use with watercolor pigment is the first challenge students will face. Diluted watercolor paint should usually be the consistency of two-percent milk, but this can vary depending on the technique one is using. Students will benefit from having a painting-value and mixing chart. For example, I encourage my students to prepare a chart of mixed greens so they can see the full potential of working with different combinations of pigment (see color-chart sidebar).

### Tool No. 6: Work Large

If you are brave enough to take an art class and lay your abilities on the line for other students to observe, give yourself permission to draw larger. Larger objects on paper will require more paint, but they will allow you more practice. Empower yourself with the tools of drawing larger objects.

### Tool No. 7:
### Paint With Pigment Straight From the Tube, and Mix Colors

There are many beautiful pigments available on the market, and you can use them straight from the tube. However, if you want to become a successful watercolorist, you need to learn how to mix colors and observe the beautiful things that happen when you do. Always try to use at least two pigments in each moistened area of the paper. Observe what happens and make mental notes about the intensity, texture, and relative temperature of the resulting mixtures.

### Tool No. 8:
### Note the Variety in Nature

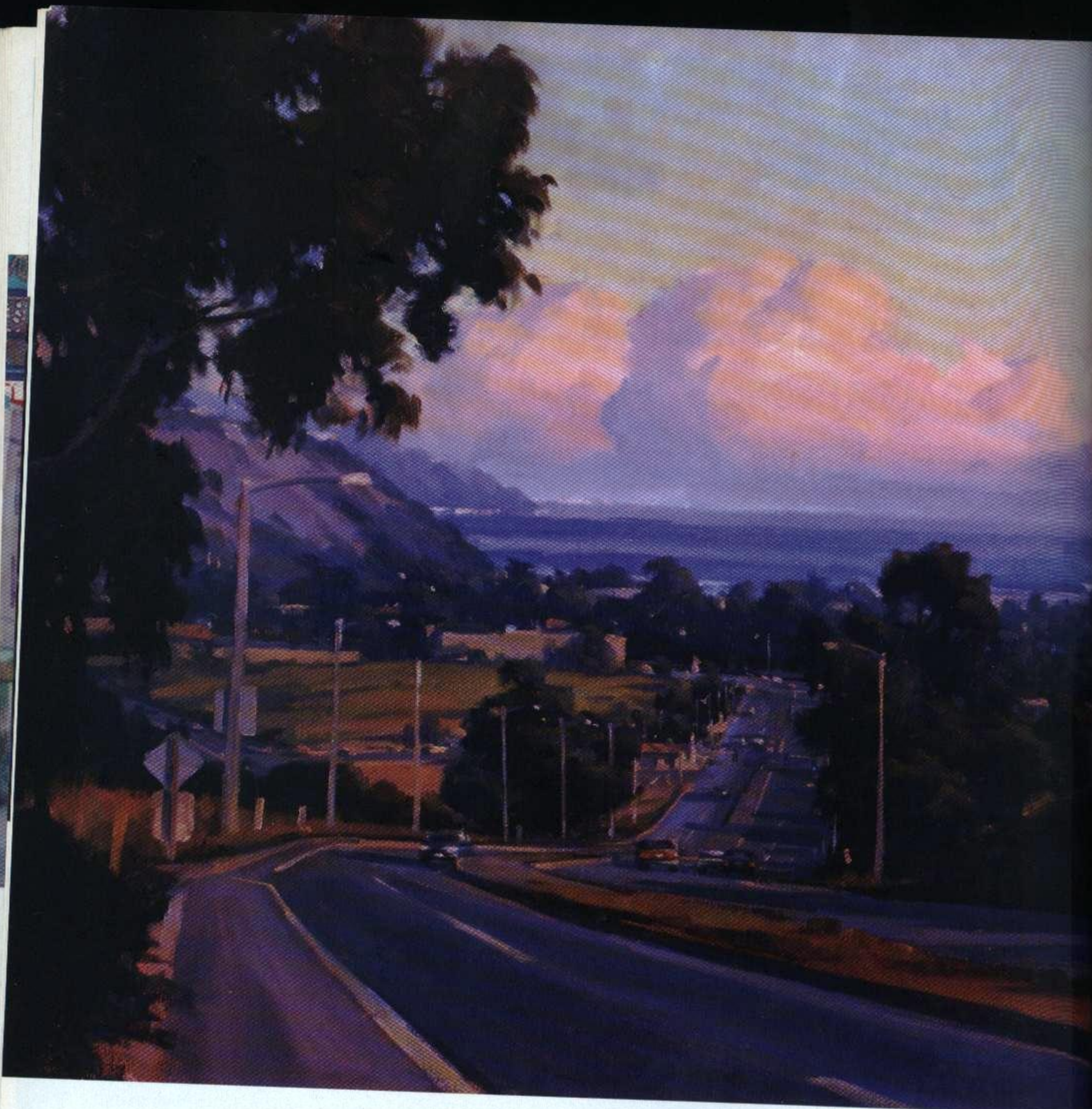
Nature has always been the best teacher, and if you observe its variety and richness, you'll become [...] painter. Beginners paint tree[...] bushes, and grasses with per[...] metry because they only see [...] larities in those forms. But w[...] rience, they discover the vari[...] repetition in the sizes, spaces, [...] textures, shapes, and surfaces [...] objects, and they discover way[...] resenting nature with paint.

### Tool No. 9:
### Verify the Mechanical Wi[...] the Natural

Almost all of us use photogra[...] developing our paintings, whe[...] refer to them only when paintin[...] or paint entirely from scanned [...] on a computer screen. There's [...] inherently wrong with photogra[...] they offer a limited and distort[...] of potential painting subjects. T[...] way to understand those restric[...] to spend time drawing and pain[...] directly from nature. I urge my [...] to paint from a real still-life arran[...] set up in their home, spend a few [...] sketching outdoors, or compare [...] snapshots with the person they [...] to paint. Those are ways of learn[...] how values, colors, shadows, high[...] and shapes change when recorde[...] the one-eyed machine.

### Tool No. 10:
### Open Yourself Up to New Id[...]

Most of us have learned from life [...] experience to see what we believe [...] should see, and we become restric[...] by the limits of our own imaginat[...] We need to be trained to see color [...] shapes so we understand that a g[...] may actually contain reds, blues, a[...] greens; and a straight line may ac[...] mark the edge of a sloping roof. I [...] encourage students to squint their [...] to discover more color and more li[...] than the untrained eye can see.



**MICHAEL OBERMEYER**, an artist from Laguna Beach, did this by painting the Pacific Coast Highway in his work *Welcome to Malibu*. Hugging the coast and running from one end of the community to the other, this main thoroughfare through Malibu sits between the Santa Monica Mountains and the shimmering Pacific Ocean. To locals, it's "Main Street": a practical way to get from home to work, shopping, and school. To visitors, it is a trail of wonders offering new and startling vistas around each bend. Obermeyer captured both of these aspects by using a compositional landscape formula that harks back to the 17th century—dark masses of trees framing a view into the distance—to show both enduring nature and modern development. Capturing the subtle glow of cool, late-afternoon light, his painting conveys a sense of both the timeless and the contemporary.

Malibu prides itself on maintaining a rural environment and limiting development. Yet over the decades numerous homes have been constructed along the beaches and across the hillsides. **JOHN BUDICIN,** an artist from southern California, explored this interplay of houses and land in his painting *Got Sunglasses?* Capturing the light of the scene with rare sensitivity, the work depicts a view across rolling hills dotted with private homes.

Before becoming a landscape painter, Budicin worked in advertising, designing bold, graphic displays. Once he began to paint, his aesthetic vision shifted toward smaller-scale,





FAR LEFT

**Welcome to Malibu**

by Michael Obermeyer, 2006, oil, 18 x 24. All artwork this article collection the artist.

LEFT

Many of the participants chose Leo Carrillo, a state park and beach off Malibu's Pacific Coast Highway, as their location of inspiration.

BELOW

**Let the Skies Pour Down Righteousness**

by Cathey Cadieux, 2005, oil, 30 x 36.

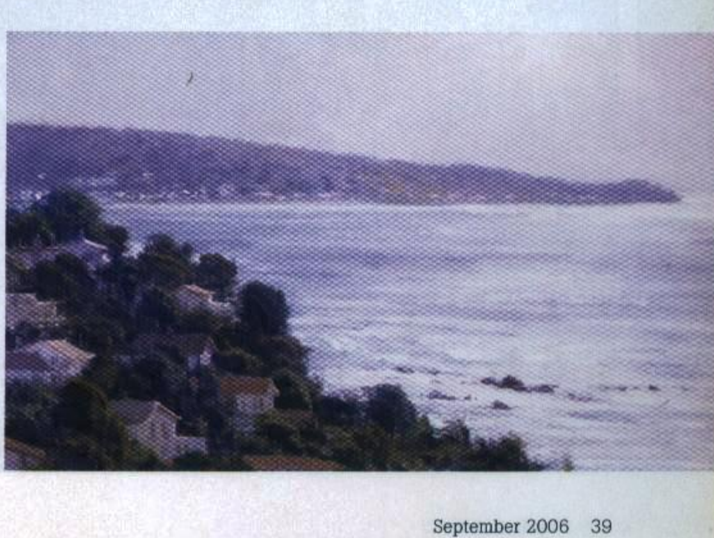
BOTTOM

**Got Sunglasses?**

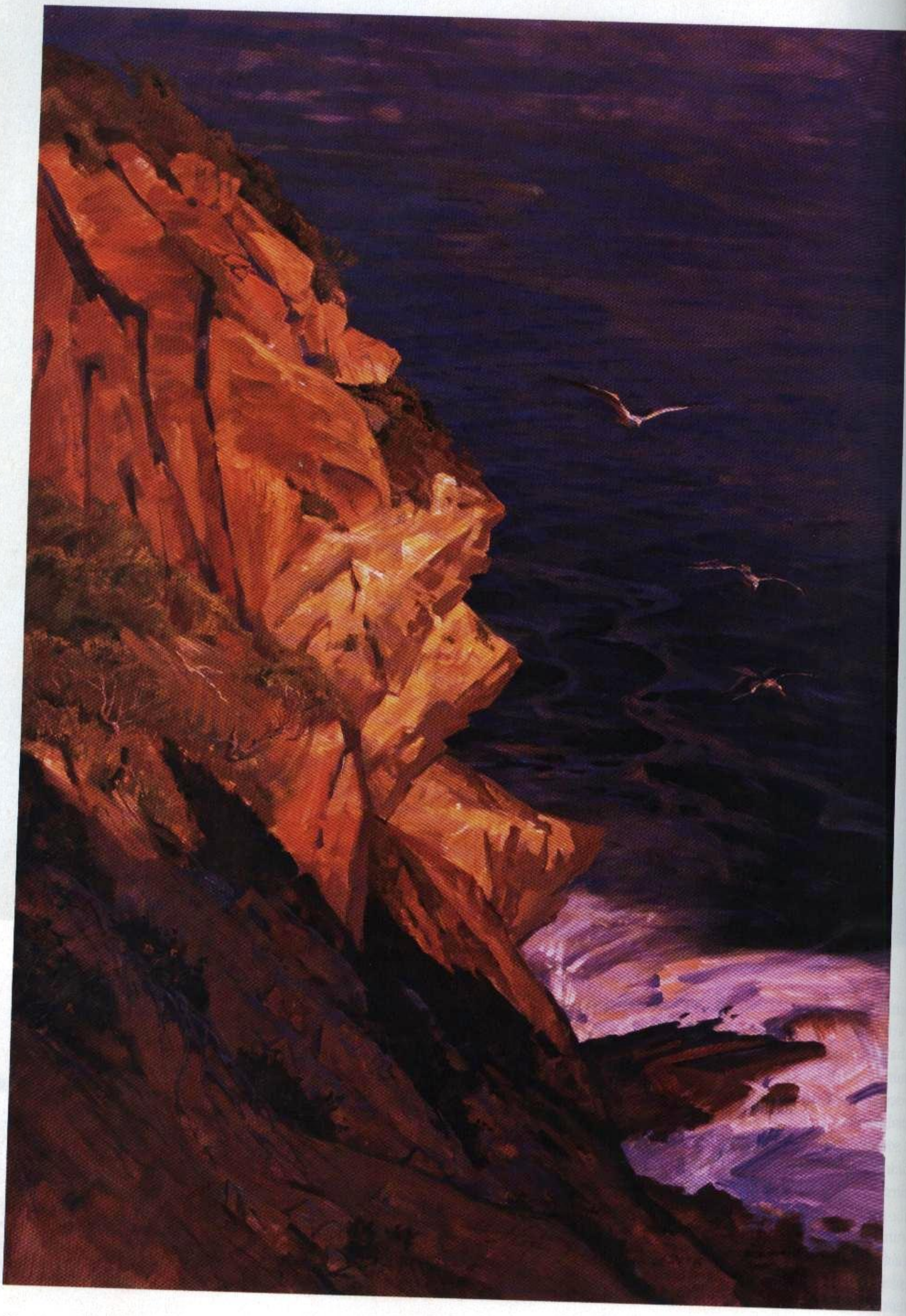
by John Budicin, 2006, oil, 14 x 24.



more intimate scenes. Although Budicin took classes from other artists when he began to paint, his real education came from nature. The artist recalls perfecting his skills by painting "hundreds of 6" x 8"s." Rather than attempting to render these scenes in a particular style, Budicin let nature dictate the final result. "I was always trying to get the *feeling* of what I was seeing," he says. In *Got Sunglasses?* we see how the artist employs masterful brushwork and subtle variations in a limited palette to create a sense of glaring sunlight.



The sunshine is what has drawn people to California for more than a century. It also has the ability to turn studio artists into plein air painters. **CATHEY CADIEUX** was born in Oklahoma and first studied art at the American Academy of



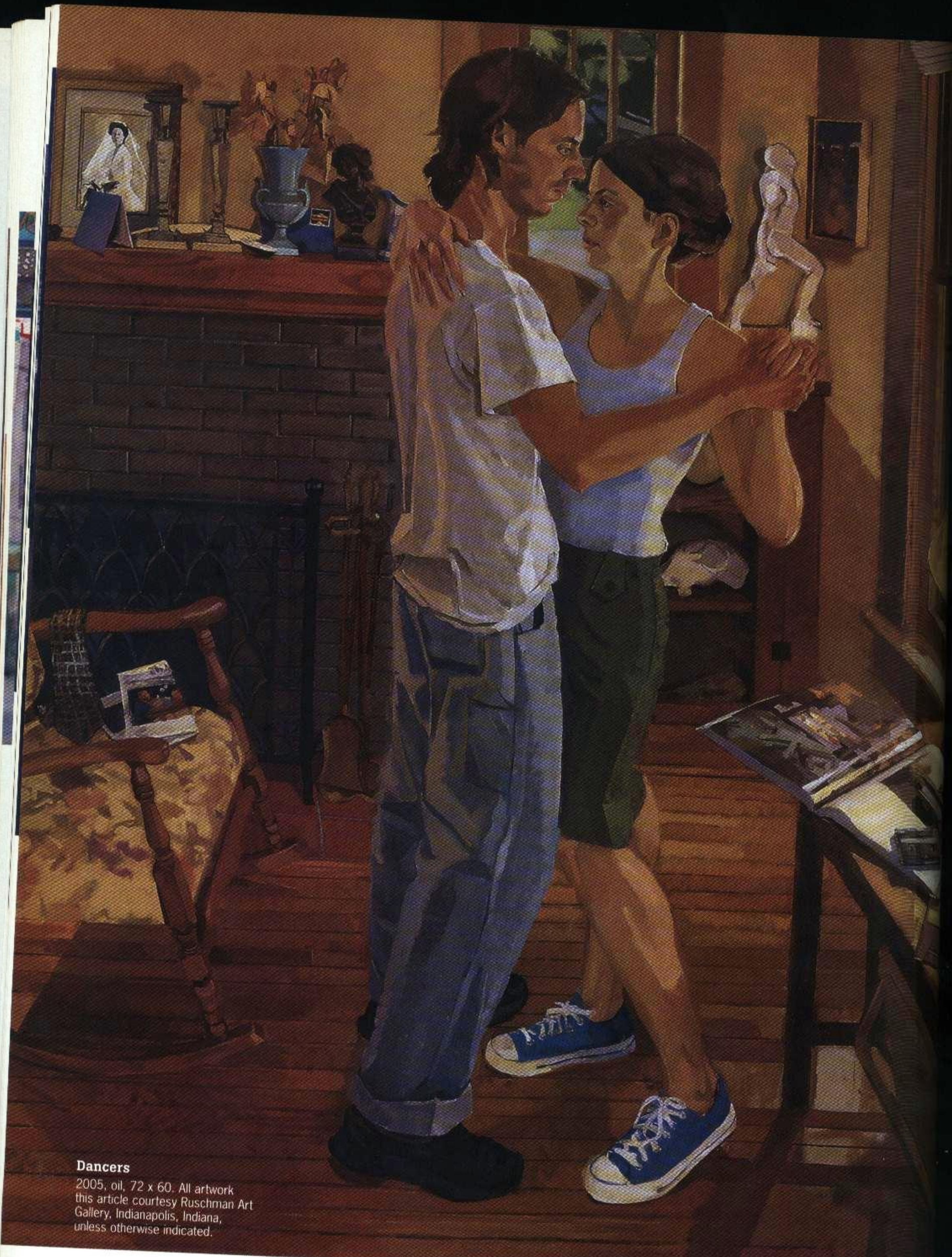


influences, he has developed skills that are quite traditional. He is represented in this exhibition by *Meditation Garden*, a small canvas that captures the paradoxical intimacy and grand scale of Malibu's Serra Retreat. Located high on a bluff within a small canyon, the site offers spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. Intrigued by the way the warm light harmonized the entire scene, Sanchez focused on capturing the dazzle of the sunset. His palette of glowing colors conveys the spiritual and peaceful ambience of the Serra Retreat.

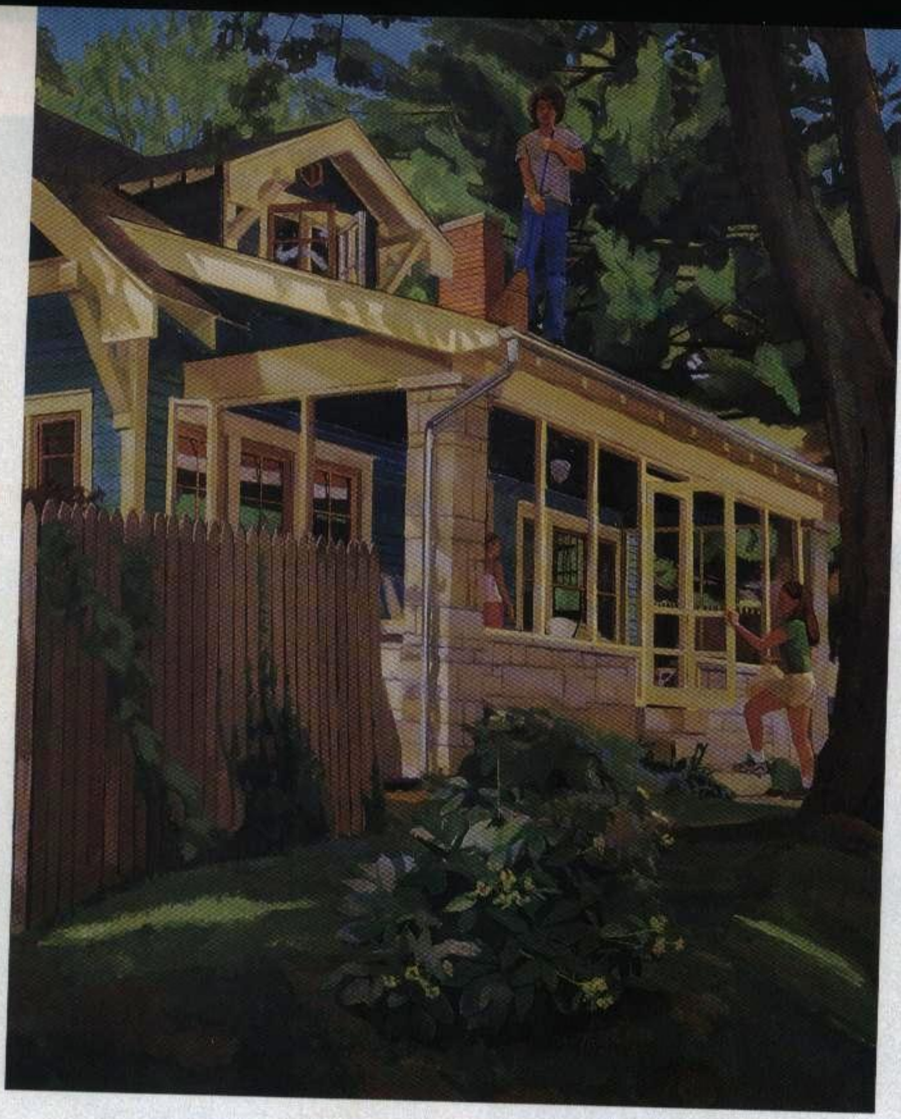
**JOHN COSBY,** a resident of Laguna Beach, hadn't been to Malibu in years and had never painted there before participating in this exhibition. When he arrived in Malibu, he spent most of the day painting the coast. But as he was driving home, he passed through the business district, which was filled with bustling activity. Entranced by the drama of headlights and store signs, Cosby pulled to the side of the road and did a quick study of the scene, which resulted in *Hot and Fast*. This view of Malibu's unofficial "downtown" shows the community as active and alive. The artist's painting features the large, free-standing sculpture that graces the top of a Mexican fast-food restaurant, a local landmark.

Another artist drawn to Malibu's picturesque scenery is **SCOTT PRIOR.** This young painter was looking through a surfing magazine when he saw a photograph taken from a novel vantage point overlooking Pacific Coast Highway. Not wanting to copy the photograph, he spent hours on hillsides looking for the same location. Eventually he succeeded and painted *The Bu*, a view that captures the energy of Malibu's commercial strip, with the famous Malibu Pier in the distance. ■

*Michael Zakian is the director of the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art at Pepperdine University, in Malibu, California.*



**Dancers**
2005, oil, 72 x 60. All artwork this article courtesy Ruschman Art Gallery, Indianapolis, Indiana, unless otherwise indicated.



## Kennedy's Palette

Williamsburg, Gamblin, and Winsor & Newton brands in the following hues:

- cadmium yellow light
- cadmium yellow medium
- Naples yellow
- Mars yellow
- raw sienna
- Mars orange
- rosso veneto
- King's Blue
- raw umber
- cadmium red light
- cadmium red medium
- alizarin crimson
- dioxazine purple
- phthalo blue
- ultramarine blue
- phthalo green
- terre verte
- chromium oxide green
- Mars black
- flake white No. 1
- titanium white
- titanium/zinc white

reflect a type of open-ended activity that spreads itself through time. I have done some paintings that are loose allegories of figures arranged with a still life, but they are more evocative than specific. I think the real drama and the real narrative, however, are the formal drama of the painting and the implied presence of the artist through the touch and forming of the paint."

When Kennedy was interviewed for this article, he expanded on the "presence of narrative." "I sometimes think of activities from my own life that might serve as the unifying narrative for a painting," he explains, "and then I hire one or two models to pose in similar situations. Then I begin to paint."

Kennedy offered more information about the narrative aspects of his painting in a short essay he wrote for the catalogue of a recent exhibition at First Street Gallery, in New York City (February 28 through March 25, 2006). "Over the past six years the Craftsman bungalow that we live in has gradually become the unspoken character in most of my paintings," he wrote. "I am drawn to the paradoxes of Craftsman design, in part, because they are the same paradoxes that make up America. It is at once idealistic and practical. It embodies the polar American impulses toward the utopian and the commercial equally. The house is my leitmotif," Kennedy suggested. "How light and air permeate and surround it. ... I treasure its nestlike spaces, the warmth of the wood it is built from, how its forms are substantial yet simultaneously defy gravity and, most important, how the entire ensemble holds light." The work in the First Street Gallery exhibition included oil paintings showing both an interior and an exterior space, most of them created from models posing in the rooms of the artist's bungalow home. "I'm intrigued by the contrast between the sharply defined architectural space of an interior and the soft, rich colors in nature. This provides a lot of material for painting. I've also explored the idea of looking from the outside into the darker spaces visible through a window. I've placed figures on the roof and porch, under the shade of a tree, and moving along a sidewalk or a driveway. These contrasting relationships seem to comprise the stuff of life."

All of the themes in Kennedy's work relate to his idea that painting is a process of using measured observations of buildings, people, furniture, plants, and objects to "produce an illusion that borders on the magical." ■

*M. Stephen Doherty is the editor-in-chief of* American Artist.



ABOVE
**Night Reading**
2003, oil, 40 x 48.
Collection Melanie Parke and Richard Kooyman.

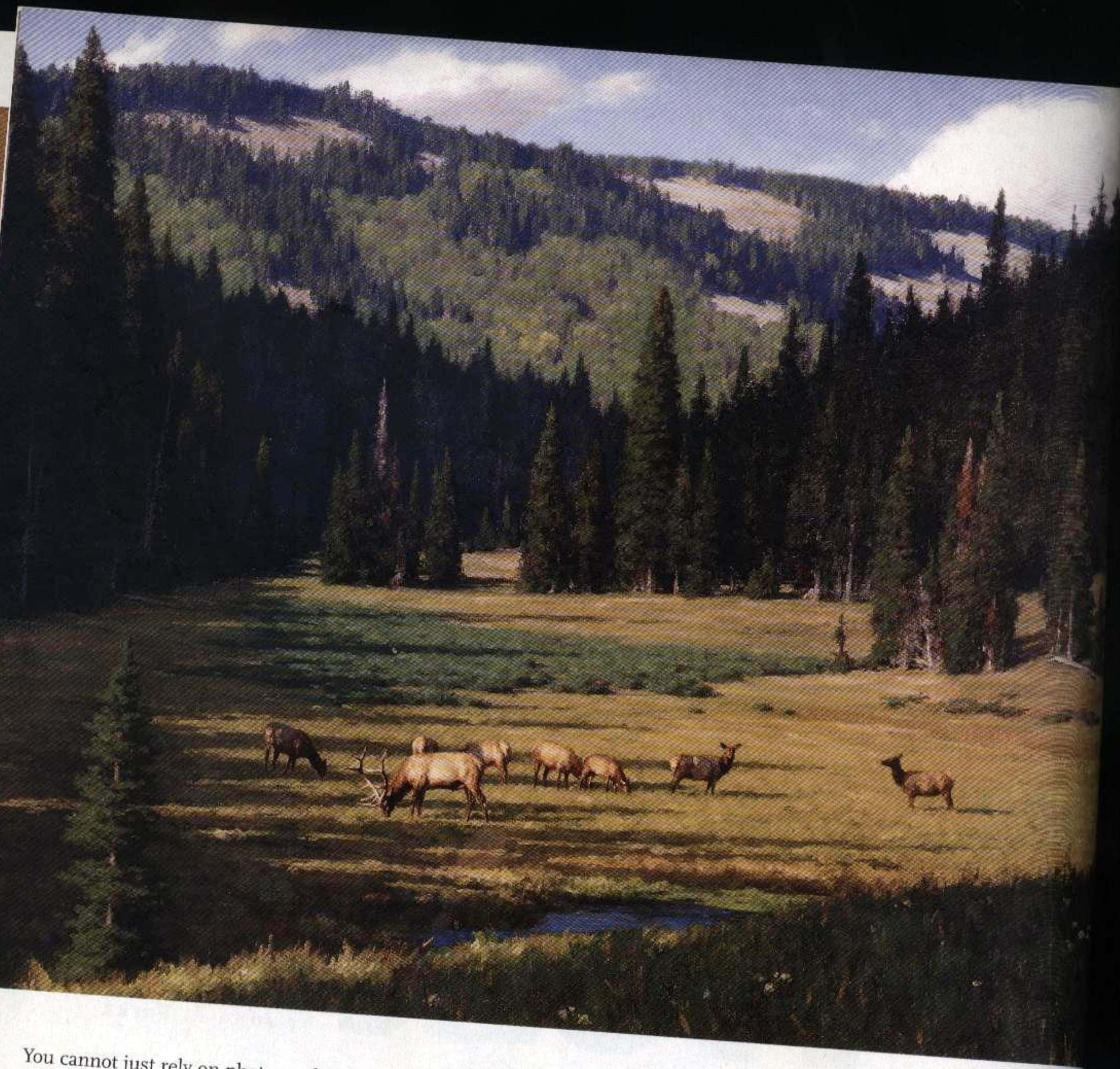
OPPOSITE PAGE
**Beneath the Maple**
2005, oil, 64 x 48.

## About the Artist

**Tim Kennedy** earned a B.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University, in Pittsburgh, studied at The Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (1979 and 1980), in Skowhegan Maine, and received an M.F.A. from Brooklyn College. His paintings have been featured in dozens of solo exhibitions at First Street Gallery, in New York City; Ruschman Art Gallery, in Indianapolis; and the Art Museum of Greater Lafayette, in Indiana. His work has been included in recent group shows at Lori Bookstein Fine Art, Neptune Fine Art, and the George Billis Gallery, all in New York City, as well as at the SoFA Gallery at Indiana University and the Indiana University Art Museum, both in Bloomington, Indiana. Kennedy has received individual artist grants from the Indiana Arts Commission



and The Pollock-Krasner Foundation. To view more of his work, visit the Ruschman Art Gallery website at www.ruschmangallery.com; the "Human Measures" website at http://www.indiana.edu/~sofa/human measures/; or studiomatters.com. To contact Kennedy, e-mail him at kennedy@indiana.edu.



You cannot just rely on photographs—you can never truly experience the color any other way than to actually be right there." The artist accomplishes his own field studies, distinctive in their completeness, in less than two hours.

For Smith, getting to his subject matter involves the skills and strengths of a veteran outdoorsman. His home is outside Pinedale, Wyoming, at an elevation of more than 8,000 feet. "The property is a little under 300 acres and adjoins to a national forest," the artist says. "It consists of pine forest, aspen gorges, meadows, and sagebrush flats. Springs and intermittent streams flow throughout the area, and there are incredible mountain views." This part of the Rockies is known as the Wind River Mountains, a hundred-mile-long chain of peaks that contains more than 4,000 lakes, many of them still unnamed. It is also home to elk, moose, bears, coyotes, mountain sheep, and other wildlife. Smith enjoys nothing so much as camping at night and painting during the day, nor is he averse to a little hardship and adventure when it comes to arriving at a place such as the scene for *Unnamed Lake*. "I noticed this fairly good-sized lake northeast of Glover Peak on the map, and it didn't have a name or an elevation designation," recalls the artist. "I'm familiar with this area but didn't know this lake existed. It is less than a half-mile from the trail, but it is 800 feet straight up a field of boulders. Since I didn't know anyone who had been to this lake, I wanted to see it. With the encouragement from younger companions—one of whom packed my paint box—we made it to the lake, where I was able to do a rough field sketch."

Smith augments his studies with photography, which allows him to work up more complex paintings back in the studio. "I used to use color slides," he says, "and I constructed a big box with a screen so that I could project the slides from the rear and view the illuminated scene in the studio. These days I use a large computer screen and look at the digital image." Smith finds that he achieves a more accurate sense of the light by looking at an illuminated image rather than a flat print. He will often square up a study onto a larger

RIGHT

**Clark Lake Pass**

1996, oil, 10 x 12.

The artist completes field sketches such as this one in less than two hours. He believes the field study is essential to understanding color.

BELOW

**Unnamed Lake**

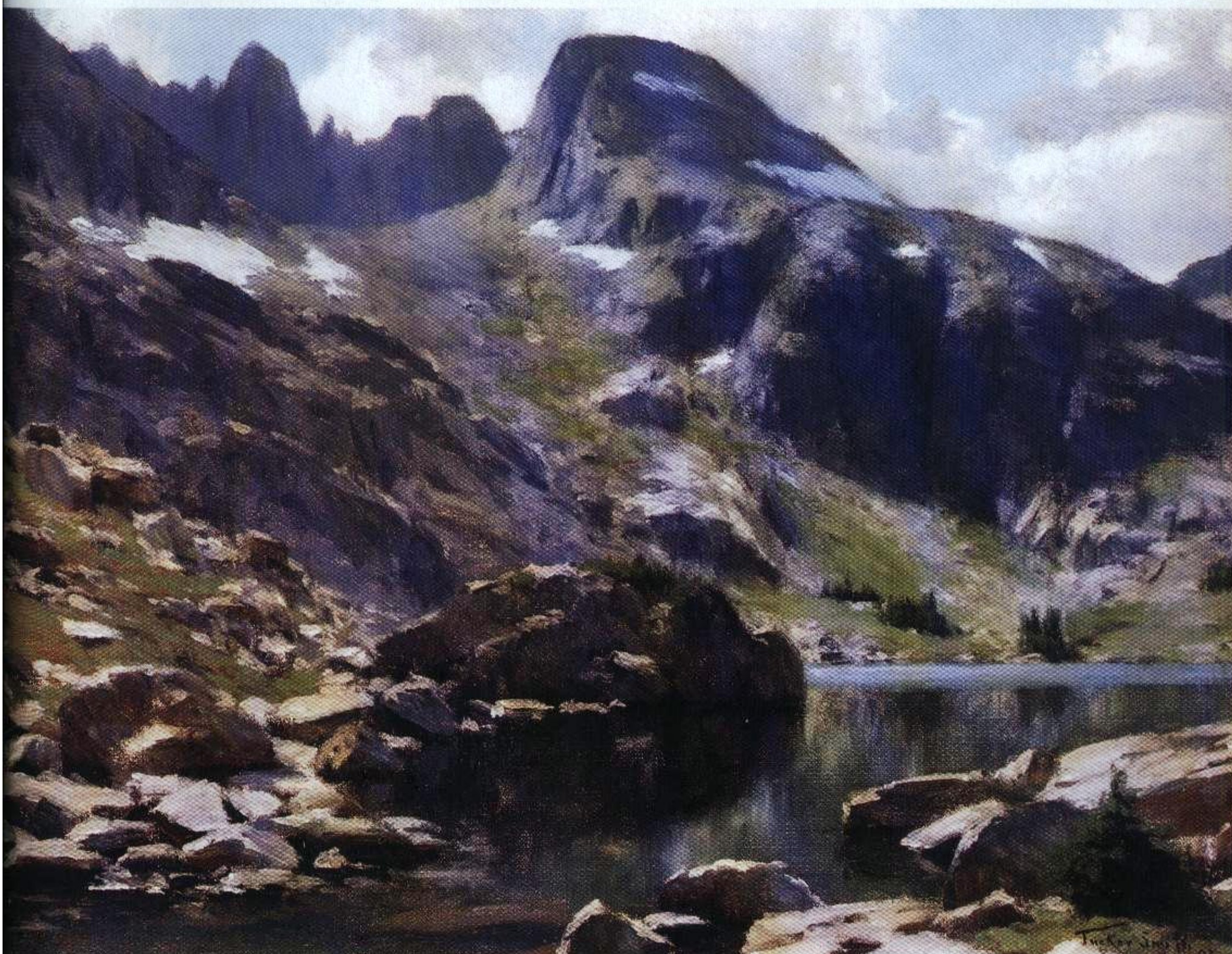
2002, oil, 12 x 16.

OPPOSITE PAGE

**Packer Creek**

2003, oil, 32 x 40.





### Step 1

Will first created a line drawing in charcoal on canvas based on a quick thumbnail sketch, working out the placement of shapes. She chose a complementary-color scheme: warm-green apples contrasting with the cool-red fabric.

### Step 2

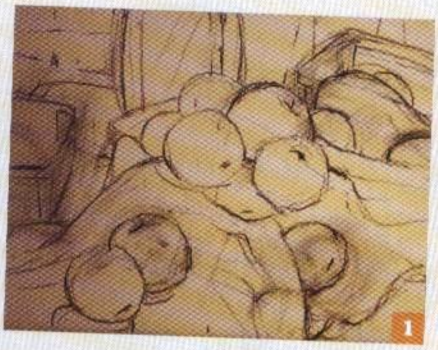
An oil-wash underpainting came next. When painting in oil Will starts with a thin wash on canvas; for pastel, she begins with a wash with mineral spirits on sanded paper. She finds that this underpainting establishes the mood of the piece and provides a basic color hue and temperature. At this stage the artist was seeing how the big shapes worked, particularly the green shapes against the red areas. She also covered the canvas with a basic value; in this case, the value was the local color of the objects. Will was careful that with so many objects in the composition the painting did not become too crowded.

### Step 3

Will next laid in color with a palette knife, pushing the paint around with a brush. This kept the work loose—and it deposited a generous amount of paint. The artist started at the center of interest—the upper-right red apple that is surrounded by the green ones. She placed the darkest dark next to that red apple. By establishing this relationship first, she could judge the other colors against it. As she blocked in the big shapes, she looked for the correct value, temperature, and intensity for each, first at the center of interest and then in adjacent areas. The warm and cool color within the shadow of the red fabric was painted at this point to serve as a guide for other shadow areas.

### Step 4

She continued to work on the apples. The fabric was repainted with a red of higher intensity to balance the color intensity of the apples. Tones of the red-green color were brought into the rest of the painting for unity in the baskets, background, and shadows but were significantly grayed down so they wouldn't compete with the apples. A combination of textures was achieved with both a palette knife and brushes.



1



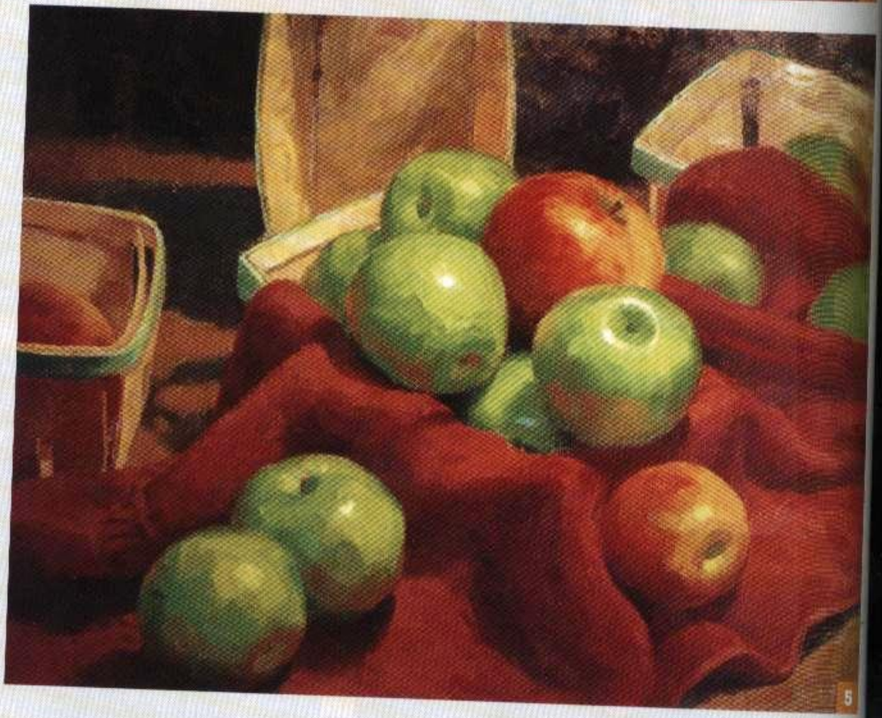
2



3



4



5

THE COMPLETED PAINTING:
**Red & Green**
2005, oil, 11 x 14.

### Step 5

Next, the warm and cool colors were fine-tuned throughout the painting, especially the red tones. The center red apple was given a touch of pure color to balance the intensity level. Note how Will arranged the warm-red apples so they would form a triangle to keep the viewer's eye moving through the painting. The green apples created a sense of movement from the upper right to the lower left. "Near the finish, I carefully placed the darkest-dark accents and the highlights," says Will. At this point, the artist set the painting aside for a while to prevent her from overworking the piece. "I want to retain a fresh, painterly look," she explains. As a final check she turned the painting upside down and viewed it in a mirror, looking with a fresh perspective for any inconsistencies, areas in need of adjustment, or edges that needed emphasis or softening.

**DEMONSTRATION: VALUE, TEMPERATURE, & INTENSITY**




Sharon Will continues to use an exercise she learned from a teacher at the Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association. Her instructor would put a color down and ask Will to match it with another color of the same value. Then she would put a color down and tell Will to warm it up or cool it down, retaining the same value. Finally, she asked Will to gray down a color while retaining the value. "It's a great exercise not only for making you more sensitive to color relationships but also for showing you how to mix colors," she says. "Knowing how and when to warm up, cool down, or gray a color is something every painting requires. The more we train our eyes, the greater our vision and understanding of color become. The result is growth in our art.

"In order to paint a color of a particular value, temperature, or intensity, you first have to be able to see it. If you can see it, then you can paint it," Will asserts.

**Two left rows:**
COLOR INTENSITY — color grayed down (left) and natural (right).

**Two center rows:**
COLOR TEMPERATURE — color cool (left) and warm (right).

**Two right rows:**
COLOR VALUE — dark (left) and light (right).

piece *Pears and Purple,* the lavender background provides a colorful key to the contrasting yellow-green pears.

The Blue and Rose periods of Picasso's career are excellent illustrations of the creative use of color for artistic effect. The Impressionists also used hue choice to great advantage, with small bits of color defining form, creating mood, and adding texture and joyful contrasts to much of their work. They used hue to give their paintings an excitement that was new to the art world at that time.



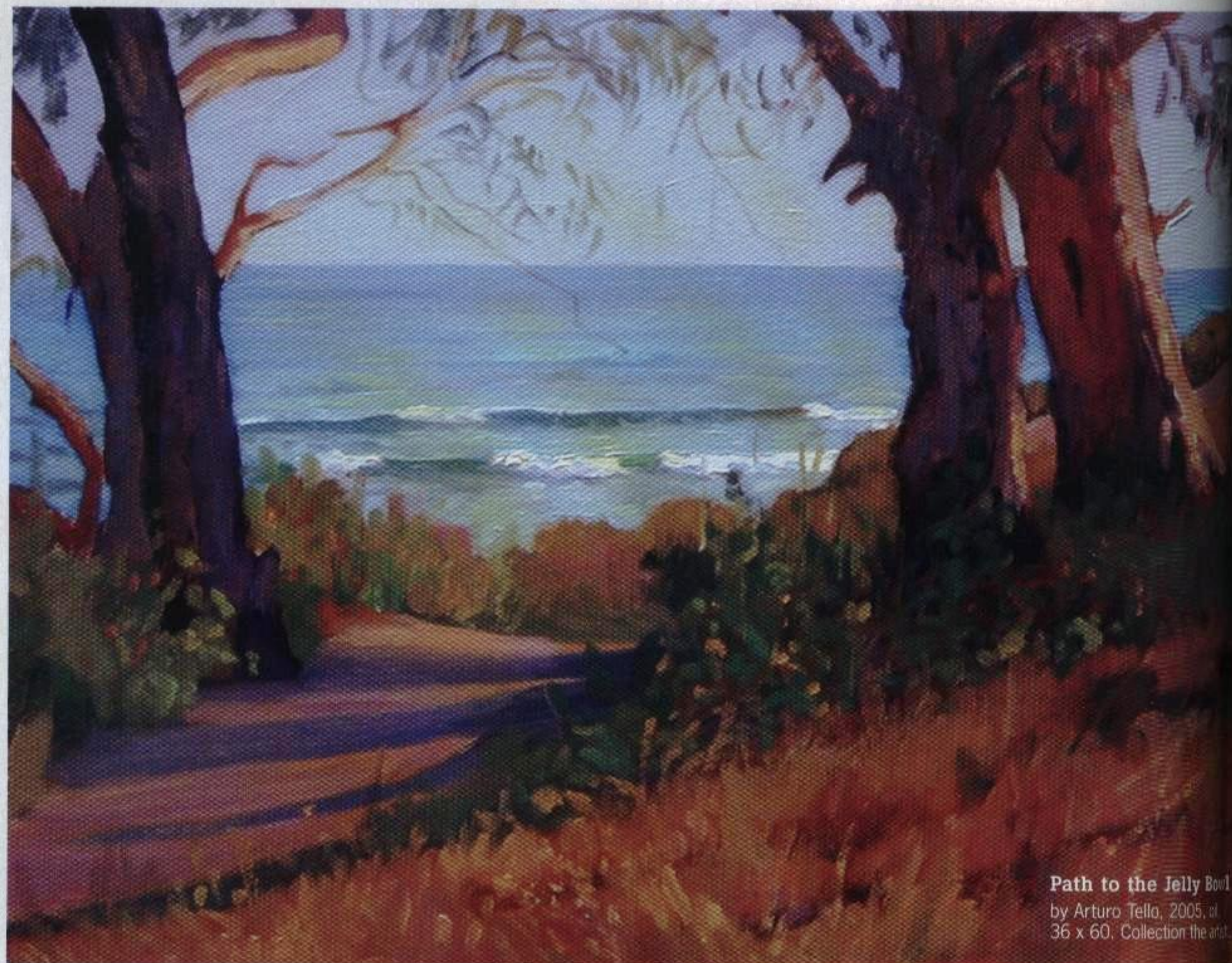
### Color Temperature

A color's temperature—whether a hue is warm or cool—also needs to be considered before pigment is applied to a surface. Certain questions need to be answered: Should an area recede with a cool tone, or come forward with a warm one? Does a particular red lean toward the yellow (warm) side of the color spectrum, or is it closer to the blue (cool)? That is, does the red look slightly more orange, as in cadmium red, or is it closer to a purple, as in alizarin crimson? Does a blue choice lean toward the red or purple (warm), or is it more turquoise (cool)? Will uses contrasting color temperatures very effectively in *Patriotic Flower Box.*

She notes that in the step-by-step example, the choice of whether to use a warm or cool red, and a warm or cool green, makes a huge difference, not only in the vibrancy and appearance of the finished painting but also in the relationships of adjacent colors, as well as how each color is used to turn a form.

### Intensity

Will points out that too much use of intense color can be detrimental to a painting. The intensity, or saturation, of hues can be easily controlled by adding a small amount of complementary color to pure colors, thus graying them down a bit. Most successful paintings show a careful balance of intense and grayed color. The intensities are used to enhance and control form, to track the eye of a viewer, and to emphasize or de-emphasize parts of a composition. *Backlit Lilacs* is saturated with intense color, yet it is balanced perfectly by the neutral, subdued intensity of the large shadow shape. Will didn't overdo the saturated color.



**Path to the Jelly Bo[w]l**
by Arturo Tello, 2005, oil,
36 x 60. Collection the art[ist].

> Since 1986, The Oak Group has held more than 60 exhibitions and raised more than $1 million for various conservation groups, including The Nature Conservancy, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, The Marin Agricultural Land Trust, and the Environmental Defense Center.

was have an exhibition of all the paintings we had done of Loon Point—to let people know what was going on and to show them the beauty of the place." The next decision they made was to donate 50 percent of the sales of the paintings in the exhibition to land-conservation organizations that would help preserve Loon Point and other threatened landscapes—a decision that established the financial donation system to which they have adhered ever since. At some point, recalls longtime member Glenna Hartmann, the friends decided to call themselves The Oak Group. "It sta[rt]ed off as an acronym for The Open Air Club, but we decid[ed] to drop it because it was funny with the K."

In the decades since its inception, The Oak Group has grown to include about 25 members, a number that has stayed consistent. Arturo Tello, a landscape painter and o[ne] of the group's founders, recognizes the benefits of having [a] relatively small group. "It's helpful for effective communication, for reasons of wall space, and for finding places to have shows."

Since 1986, The Oak Group has held more than 60 exh[i]bitions and raised more than $1 million for various conserv[a]tion groups, including The Nature Conservancy, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, The Marin Agricultural La[nd] Trust, and the Environmental Defense Center. Not only has The Oak Group raised money but it has also succeeded in [its] core mission of protecting natural landscapes. "Two of the places we've been most successful preserving are right here in Santa Barbara," says Burtt. "One area is about 20 acres s[it]uated on a coastal bluff between two highly populated residential areas, and it has cypress trees—it's an old nursery—and lots of gorgeous, feral garden plants. When I was painting there recently, I saw a 20-foot-tall bird-of-paradise flowe[r]





# Colored Pencil Society of America

## Announces Award Winners

The Colored Pencil Society of America (CPSA) recently held its 14th annual international exhibition and convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Among the artists receiving awards were Linda Koffenberger, who won the CPSA Award for Exceptional Merit and the CIPPY Award for *Beautiful Swimmers;* Andrew Dold, who won the Canson Fine Art Materials Award for Exceptional Merit for *All Is Not Lost;* Robert Lasky, who won the Faber-Castell Award for Exceptional Merit for *Field of Creams*; and Mark Fortier, who won The Joe Bascom, CPSA, Memorial Award for Exceptional Merit for *Doing Time.*

The CPSA, which was founded in 1990, is a nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to artists working in colored pencil. The society has more than 1,600 members representing 16 different countries worldwide. In 2007, the group will hold its 15th annual exhibition in Bethesda, Maryland, for which a prospectus is available online.

For more information, visit www.cpsa.org.





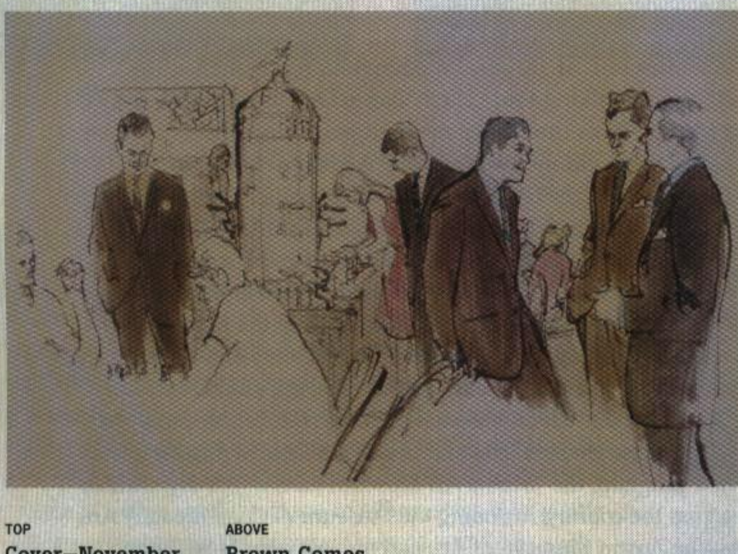
TOP LEFT
**Doing Time**
by Mark Fortier.

TOP RIGHT
**Beautiful Swimmers**
by Linda Koffenberger.

ABOVE
**All Is Not Lost**
by Andrew Dold.

LEFT
**Field of Creams**
by Robert Lasky.





TOP
**Cover—November, 1931 issue of *Physical Culture***
by Bradshaw Crandell.

ABOVE
**Brown Comes to Town**
by Alvin J. Pimsler.



years, so many that I almost don't know what to do with them. I spent a long time arranging them for this painting." The composition she arrived at is complex and almost architectural, tending to symmetry in its balance and its even spatial intervals. As in many of Lamb's paintings, an almost geometrical organization acts as a framework in which to display her powerful, sensual response to the subject matter.

In one painting, *1930s Classic Yacht Model,* the artist used somewhat more artifice to secure her subject matter. "I saw some wonderful antique model yachts for sale," she recalls, "but they were far too expensive. Then I found a contemporary model that was much more affordable. I bought it and then 'antiqued' it—I stained the sails with tea and discolored the paintwork." This picture, one of the largest the artist has created, shows the model yacht in outright profile sitting exactly in the middle of the painting on an old wooden chest. The very air around it seems to breathe with dust and age.

The most surprising painting in her recent exhibition at Spanierman Gallery, in New York City, was *Hubbard Squash.* In this piece, an enormous, curiously milky white



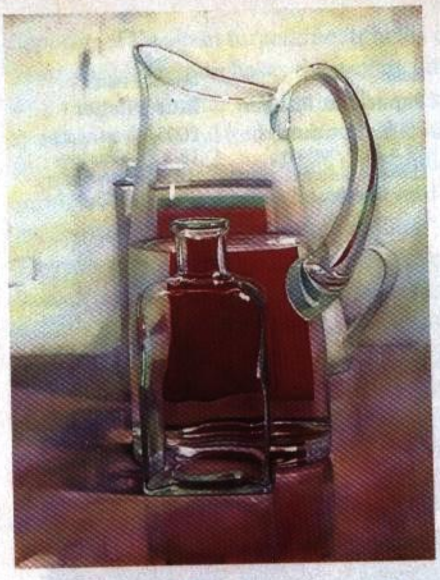
"I love to cook," admits artist Sarah Lamb as she surveys her sumptuous painting *Mousse au Chocolat*, in which the ingredients for the famous dish are arranged atop a wooden table. A copper double boiler oozes melted chocolate from its top while a block of butter sits glistening in a saucer. Over to one side a pair of perfectly formed eggs huddle together, and in the center a wooden ladle is positioned so that its chocolate-coated end sits forward over the edge of the table as though to tempt us to take a little taste. The picture is completed by a stack of raw chocolate pieces atop their wrapping paper in the foreground and a bowl of eggs dropping into the shadows in the background. This is indeed a cook's most pleasant moment, when everything is gathered together in an orderly way and work can begin on the delightful business of creating something absolutely delicious.

Almost as scrumptious as a mouthful of chocolate mousse is the paint that the artist uses to depict these raw materials. Brushing with a generous yet sensitive touch, Lamb uses the pigment to suggest the weight and texture of butter, copper, and chocolate, as well as the fragile, brittle curves of the eggs and the wrinkled wrapping paper of the chocolate. "I enjoy getting the paint to look and feel like the object I'm painting," says the artist, although she observes



that paint far more readily takes on the quality of some objects than others. Even so, Lamb's ability to summon up the textures and densities of objects through lively manipulation of the paint has an enormous range. In *Le Petit Dejeuner* she suggests the brittle crust of a French loaf, with its fragile dusting of flour, against the soft and broken interior of the bread—not to mention the subtleties of the glass jar with its sticky contents. In *Savons de Provence* she conjures the waxy iridescence of blocks of soap, and in *Prosciutto* she miraculously achieves the dense weight of a prosciutto ham, juxtaposed with the sharp darkness of a metal blade and the gnarled texture of antler handles.

Lamb has chosen to take on the very traditional format of still-life painting in which objects are laid out on a tabletop for our observation. In general she conforms to a convention of a single light source and a relatively dark background, so that the objects are clearly silhouetted and rendered with considerable drama. The danger of such an enterprise is that it can easily appear overly conservative, formulaic, and derivative. To take on this well-known task immediately subjects the artist to comparisons with the great still-life painters of the past, from Chardin to Manet. Lamb's paintings succeed in avoiding the pitfalls because of their obvious delight in observation and their luscious yet lively handling of the paint. She maintains a sensitivity and immediacy of response throughout a work that keep everything alive, and we remain convinced of her passionate interest in the objects she is painting. Furthermore, within her chosen constraints, Lamb deftly plays all the games that still-life painters delight in. She enjoys thrusting the occasional object out toward the viewer, playfully violating the space between viewer and picture plane. She also toys with narrative possibilities, as in *Mussels* and *Le Petit Dejeuner,* where it appears that someone has already starting eating the food depicted. Lamb also delights in the compositional games



LEFT
**Pitcher and Red Block**
2005, oil on copper, 14 x 11. Courtesy LeMieux Galleries, New Orleans, Louisiana.

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Bowl on Blue**
2005, oil on aluminum, 20 x 16. Courtesy Hidell Brooks Gallery, Charlotte, North Carolina.

# Turning Energetic Underpaintings Into Refined Still Lifes

Still-life artist **Benjamin Shamback** believes an energetic underpainting gives life to his carefully refined oil works on metallic surfaces.

**by John R. Kemp**

When Benjamin Shamback is painting a still life, he is not thinking about the nature of the objects he has arranged. He is thinking about what they mean to him, what he is trying to say, and how his process is creating a changed object with a new message. Every step—from composing the still-life objects to boldly brushing in the underpainting to carefully leveling the painting surface with a final coat of smooth varnish—is considered with an artisan's care. The still-life objects are simply tools in Shamback's employ, and although he depicts them faithfully, they are rendered in detail for the sake of his process and for service to his concept. Henri Matisse once said that an object in a still-life painting "must act powerfully on the imagination, and the artist's feeling, expressing itself through the object, must render it worthy of interest." For this painter, still lifes are less about interpreting imagery and more about concept, paintings as objects, and the "relationship between support, paint, and process."

Although Shamback has worked in other genres, including landscapes, his main interest is still-life painting. "There are a lot of beautiful things around here," says the 32-year-old Mobile, Alabama, resident, referring to the heavy Gulf Coast atmosphere and scenery. "Landscapes hooked me at first. But since my ideas of painting are so abstract and visual, capturing a place is not important. In still lifes I can push my concepts on to the subject and painting. Landscapes push themselves on you."

Instead of ancient live oaks and misty bayous, Shamback's subjects are usually glasses of water, pitchers, an occasional conch shell, or crinkled paper. "I like crumpled pieces of paper. They have a beauty that's unequaled," the artist says. He also likes the way a glass or pitcher of water distorts color and light. "It's so interesting and complex. I see an object and wonder what it would look like behind a glass of water. I use water as a kind of filter for the way I see things and depict reality."

Creating that image or "filter," however, requires precise and skilled draftsmanship. And, according to the artist, drawing dictates composition. "Drawing is critical to building a painting," Shamback says. "Your ability to draw dictates what you think about what you are seeing. When you paint, you're dealing with shape and its edges. You have to have

cooler colors—certain blues and reds—he will use steel or aluminum. In a way, the metal's color becomes an imprimatura for the composition, with hues of copper, steel, or aluminum showing through and blending with the underpainting.

Shamback builds his layered paintings glaze by glaze with a variety of media to get desired effects. First comes the setup. He arranges objects, sometimes for hours, to get the composition just right. If he likes what he sees, he begins painting right away. If Shamback is not quite satisfied, he does several small thumbnail sketches first to assure himself that the composition will work. When that's resolved, the artist executes a grisaille underpainting to get the image on the metal.

After the grisaille dries, he then blocks in a layer of local color, with the paint mixed with a medium composed of equal parts Venetian turpentine and stand oil. He prefers Venetian turpentine because it's sticky and allows the paint to spread evenly. This first application of color is thin enough for the grisaille underpainting to show through. The artist then does another glaze consisting of Venetian turpentine and stand oil to resolve the background before painting in objects. Once satisfied with the background, he builds the painting section by section, using a variety of media and paint mixtures.

For thick, painterly sections, Shamback uses a beeswax medium, especially for his whites. Beeswax, he says, does the opposite of Venetian turpentine. It holds details of every brushstroke. He purchases the wax medium from Studio Products. For similar results, he also uses a Maroger medium, made from black oil and double mastic varnish. According to the artist, it holds brushstrokes but handles smoothly. The paint remains in place but becomes fluid to the touch. "It's conducive to really interesting handling," Shamback says. This too comes premixed from Studio Products. To level paint in dark and thin areas while holding brushstrokes in thicker regions of the painting, the artist chooses Groves' 16th-century amber medium. He says it's particularly good for painting details, and it dries to a hard, impervious finish.

Shamback often fixes his colors between layers with a thin coat of copal retouch varnish. If the painted surface is "choppy," retouch varnish smoothes it out and levels it for the next layer of paint. The retouch varnish also gives the painting a slightly glossy or wet look that helps determine relationships between dried and newly applied paints. Plus, he says, "It protects colors forever." The varnish also prevents the copper plate from tarnishing.

After the painting is complete, the artist applies a final thin coat of copal retouch varnish to the entire surface. It gives the painting a hard, impervious finish yet is thin enough to allow the paint to dry completely. He lets the





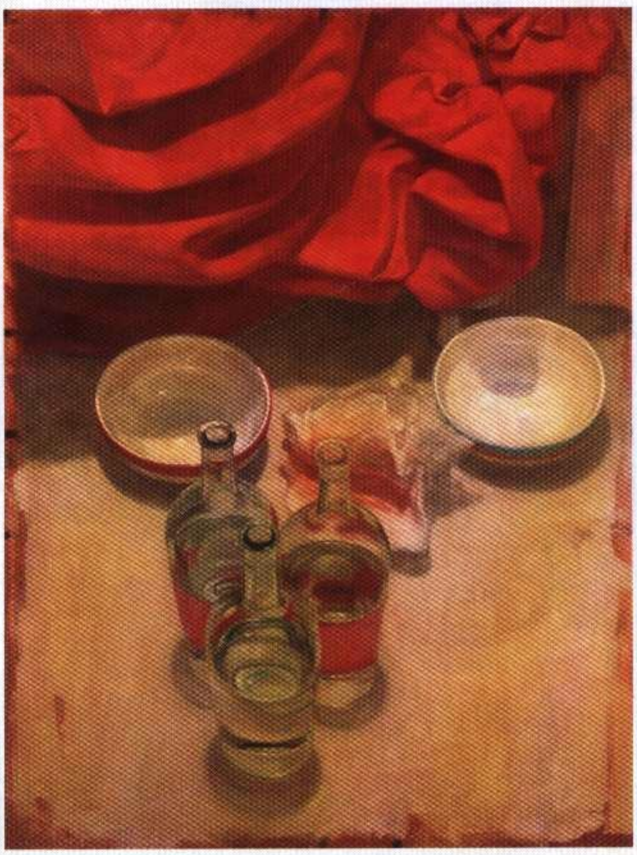
**Step 1**
Shamback began with a grisaille underpainting rendered in a mi of ultramarine blue, raw umber, and flake white. He mixes his o grisaille paint and puts it in tubes to avoid the additional oil fo store-bought blacks. The surface of the copper was previously roughened with sandpaper so the paint would adhere. "This sta for resolving any drawing and value issues and to establish the textures that I will need in the finished painting."



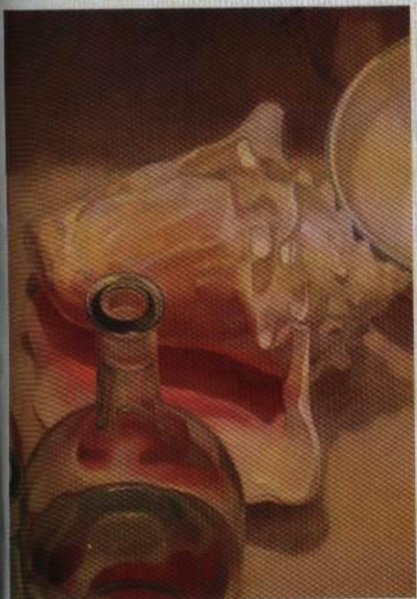
**Step 2**
Next, Shamback blo in the local color wi opaque paint. He wo in sections, applying amber and stand-oil medium to each are before the color so paint would glide on smoothly. "The purp this step is to estab the major color relationships so I ca later finish the pain section by section." Shamback knew he reduce or remove m the paint in this lay part of his process. worth using a lot of in this technique fo effect and control t results," he asserts Flemish masters ca this the dead layer, they used lower-qu paints for it since t knew most of it wo removed. As long a surface is covered opaque, that's eno paint. There's no r cake it on, but put paint on too thin w cause problems la



**Step 3**
Shamback then reduced the block-in by wiping away the color with brushes, paper towels, and his fingers. "If it's a large area, I use my fingers first," the artist explains. "Using circular motions, I push the paint into the surface with the heel of my palm, then I use a brush to wipe off the excess paint. Next, I buff the area with a paper towel. If an area is still not smooth after I use the paper towel, I finish with a ½" brush."

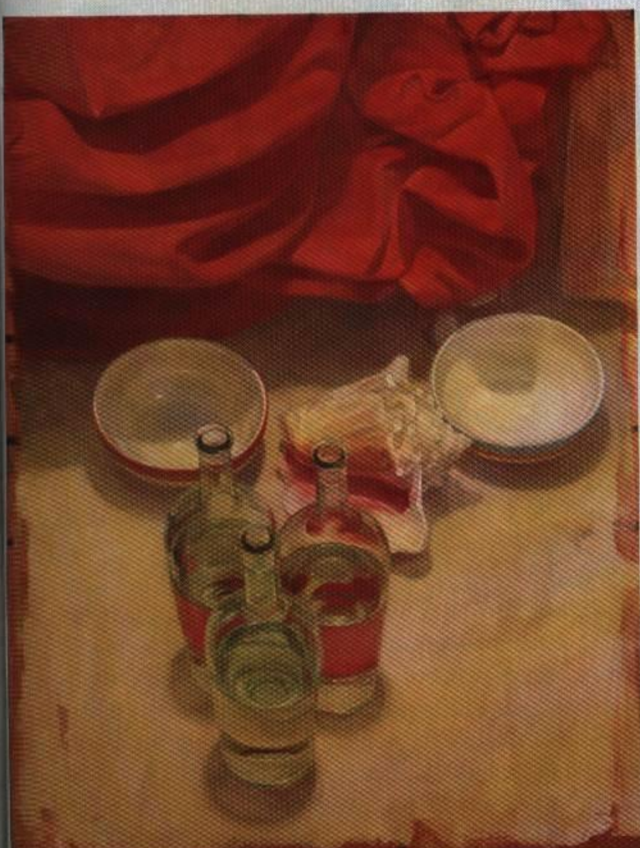


**Step 4**
The artist's next was to build up th painting by worki directly into the reduction. "In ea section I repeate process of blocki and reducing," Shamback says. sometimes takes three or more tim get it right, to ge luminosity and co color, texture, an I want."



**Step 5**

This detail shows how the seashell was refined through Shamback's method of reducing the local color, then building the form back up, painting directly into the wet reduction. The shell as shown here had undergone three cycles of painting and reduction. When painting the last cycle, the artist takes care to get the texture he desires, whether that means visible brushstrokes or a very smooth surface.



**Step 6**

The artist refined the painting further. He put more green into the red of the drapery and adjusted the highlights in the wine bottles. Note that the ground hardly changed from the initial reduction. "It's nice when that happens," says Shamback. "I shoot for a home run every time, but it usually takes me about three tries to get an area right."

THE COMPLETED PAINTING:
**Wine Bottles With Red Drapery**
2006, oil on copper, 24 x 18. Collection the artist.

painting dry for six months to a year before applying a coat of damar and mastic varnish. Because of the Gulf Coast region's high humidity, however, he often skips the final coat of varnish.

In paintings such as *Pitchers on Violet* and *Paper and Pitcher,* all of those steps and elements came together with the clarity and exactness of realism in strong, vibrant, and energy-filled brushstrokes. Yet there is tension in his paintings, a tension between reality and underlying abstraction. The artist credits the constant tug between these two elements to two artists who have greatly influenced his work and approach to painting. One is early 20th-century American illustrator and luminous painter Maxfield Parrish, and the second is the early 20th-century Lithuanian-born expressionist painter Chaïm Soutine.

"When I was first exposed to Parrish, I saw that he had made the paintings that were in my head," Shamback says. "Soutine's paintings are all object and surface. His images are relatively unimportant. They are pure energy, while Parrish's paintings are meticulous and planned. In my paintings, I want both. I want a passage that is all Maxfield Parrish—luminous and deep. And then I want a passage that has Soutine's pure energy. I want Soutine in the underpainting, energetic and brushy, and Parrish on top with detail and control. I'm torn between those two directions—and I see no reason why I can't have them both." ■

*John R. Kemp is the deputy director of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and the author of several magazine articles and books on the arts, including* Rolland Golden: The Journeys of a Southern Artist *(Pelican Publishing Company, Gretna, Louisiana).*

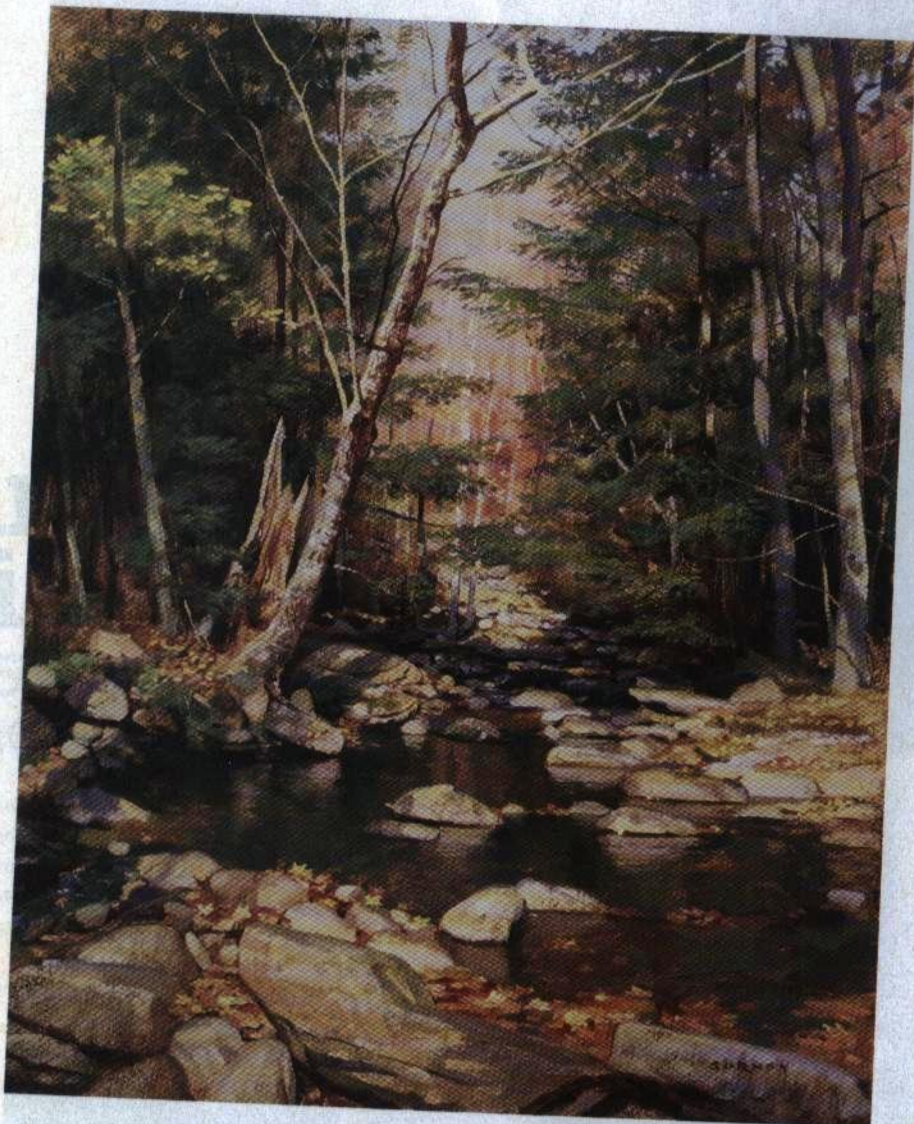
**www.myAmericanArtist.com**

*View an Online Exclusive gallery of work from Benjamin Shamback on the* American Artist *website.*

## About the Artist

**Benjamin Shamback**—who teaches art at the University of South Alabama, in Mobile—earned an M.F.A. from Fontbonne University, in St. Louis, and a B.A. from Central Connecticut State University, in New Britain. Shamback has received numerous awards, including the 2004 Allied Artists of America Gold Medal of Honor. He is represented by LeMieux Galleries, in New Orleans, and Hidell Brooks Gallery, in Charlotte, North Carolina. For more information on Shamback, visit his website at www.benjaminshamback.com.





LEFT
**Creek Above Kaaterskill Falls**
2004, oil, 20 x 16.

OPPOSITE PAGE, AB
**Winter Sunse**
2004, oil, 11 x 1

OPPOSITE PAGE, BEL
**Farm in Harlem Valley**
2004, oil, 16 x 2
Collection Sherry Smith.

of shadow married with meticulou and thoughtful draftsmanship, are very much in keeping with Gurney own interests. It was always the light, as much as the topographical features, that attracted artists to the Hudson Valley. Frederic Edwin Church, who traveled widely, always maintained that the area had the best light in the world. The Catskill Mountains, lying to the west of the Hudson River, serve to break up the skies in the generally eastward flow of air, scattering clouds about and orchestrating breathtaking sunsets. The general dampness of the Hudson Valley can create wonderful mists and gauzy, watery veils, especially early in the day; while the

array of seasonal effects," he says. Gurney is also well aware that the area has a grand history of outdoor painting dating back to the Hudson River School, which included such artists as Thomas Cole, Frederic Edwin Church, and Asher B. Durand, whom Gurney particularly admires. "He was really one of the first plein air painters," explains the artist, who has recently acquired one of Durand's oil paintings. "He painted outdoors before metal paint tubes were invented and had to travel with his paint stored in pigs' bladders."

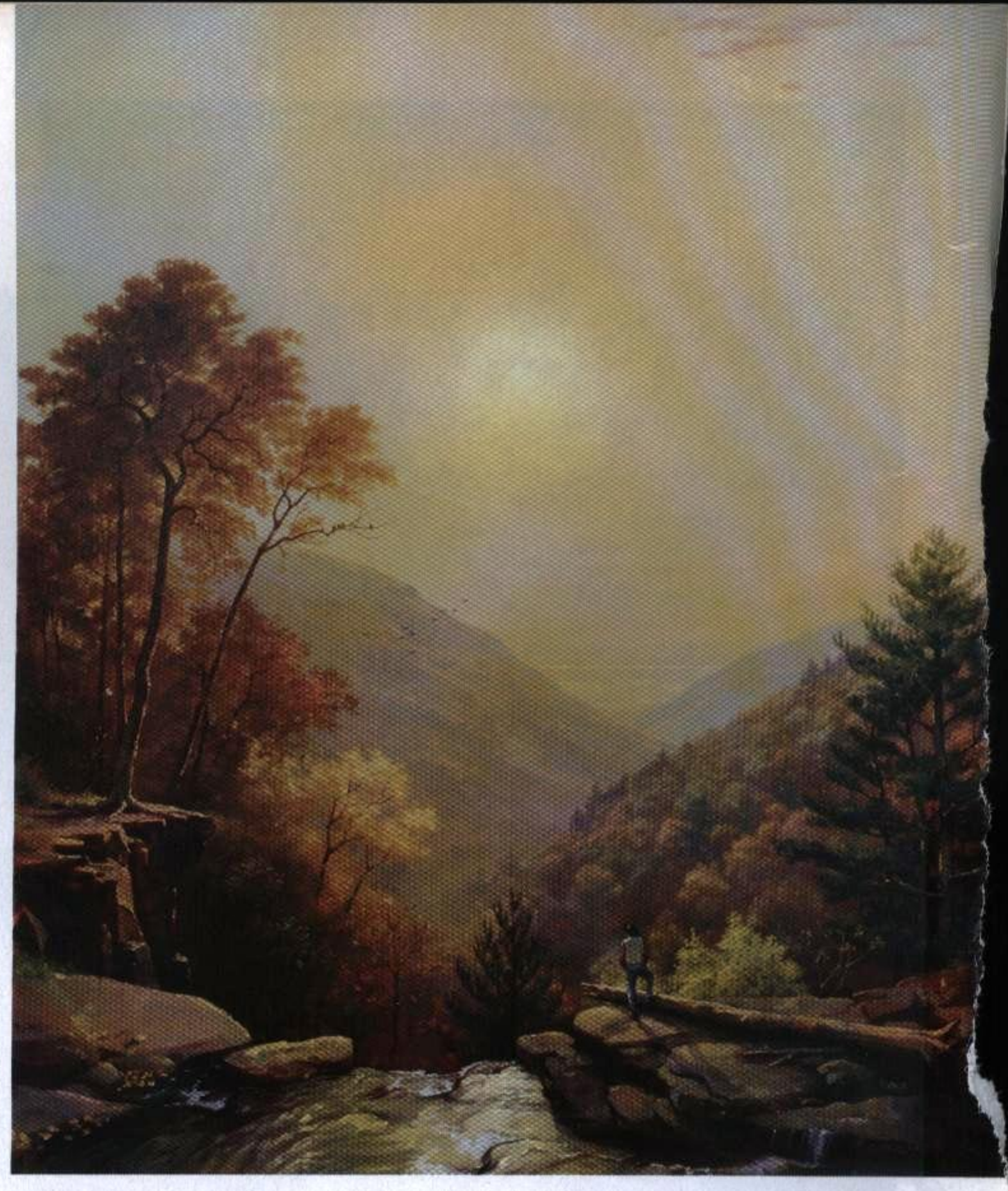
The closeness that Gurney feels to Durand appears to go beyond a shared pleasure in working en plein air, however. Looking at Durand's paintings, one can see that his feel for a delicate light, as well as his pleasure in exploring large areas

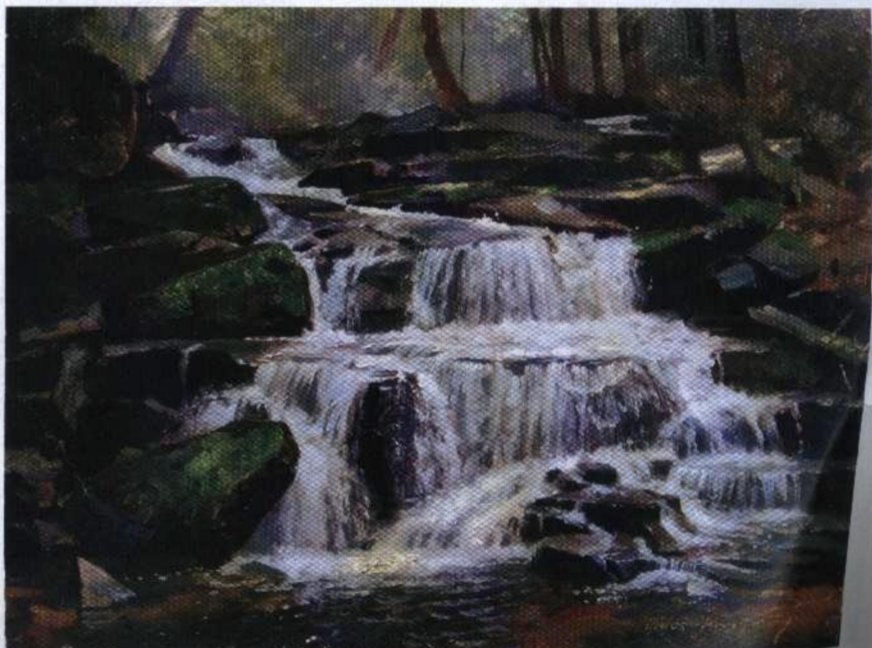
harsh, dry cold of the winter brings about diamond-hard light with arid blue skies and brilliant snow cover. Gurney has taken full advantage of these conditions in many paintings, including at least one attempt to paint directly into a golden sun sinking behind the Catskills. "It was very hard on the retina," he admits, "and in the end impossible because the sun, as well as being the brightest element in the scene, also has the most chroma. And you just can't get that in a painting." Gurney has long since discovered that what you can achieve in a painting is the richness of color in shadows, which is often missing in a photograph.

Gurney's technical approach to plein air painting varies somewhat with the subject. Generally, he will paint on a canvas stretched over a plywood board, beginning with a tint

## Books of Inspiration

In developing his landscape-painting skills, Gurney augmented his art-school experience with a number of books that helped him become better at rendering consistent light and achieving three-dimensional form. The artist cites *The Science and Practice of Oil Painting*, by Harold Speed (Chapman & Hall, London, England); *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, by Albert Boime (Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut); *A Manual of Oil Painting*, by John Collier [who was a student of Alma-Tadema] (Cassell, London, England); and *Creative Illustration*, by Andrew Loomis (Bonanza Books, New York, New York) as being particularly influential in his development. The artist also talks fondly of discovering binders of the 1954 edition of the *Famous Artists Course*, a correspondence course headlined by Norman Rockwell and several other artists/illustrators.













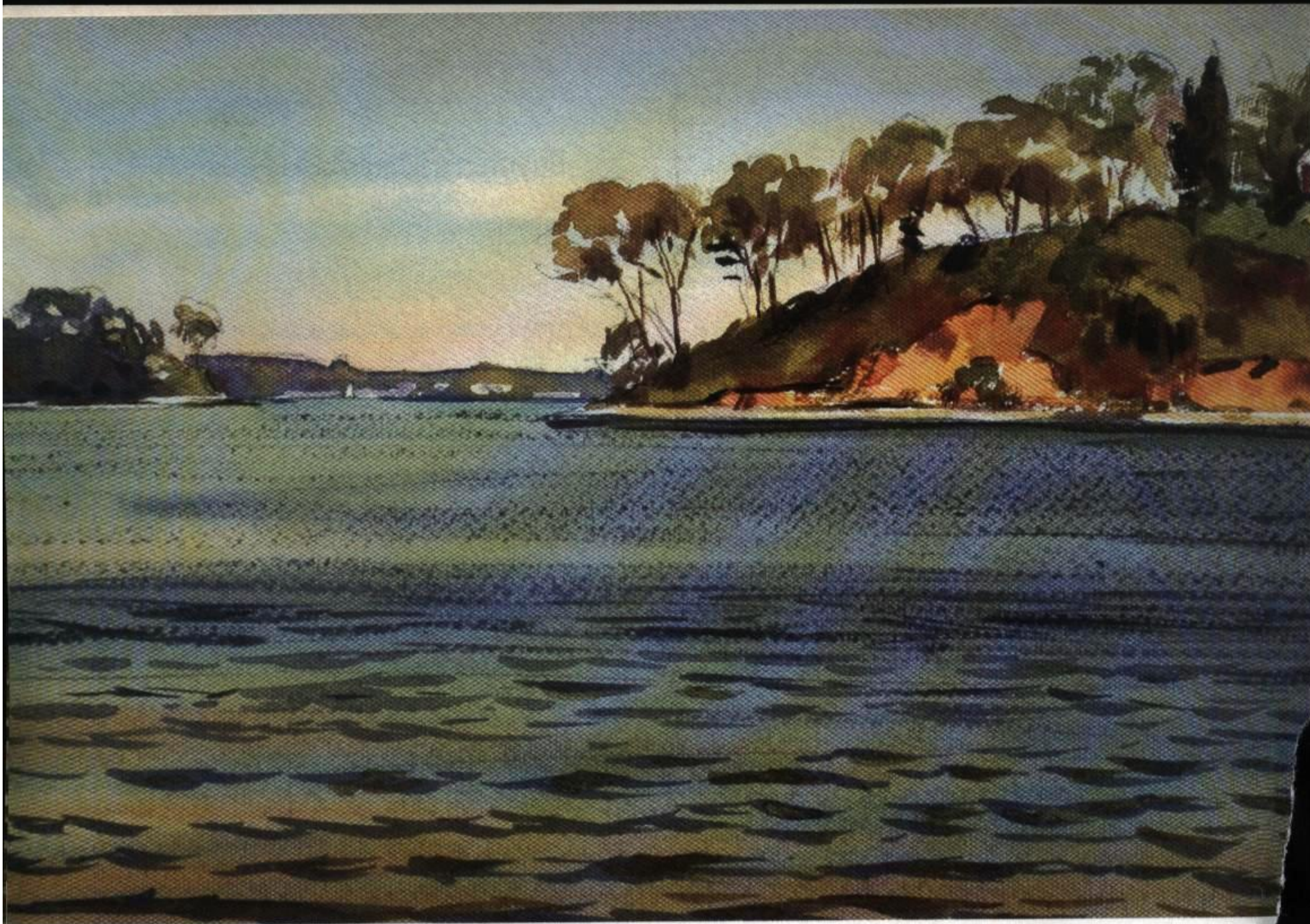
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

**Chandara**
2002, oil, 24 x 52.
This painting was included the 2002 "Dinotopia" exhibition at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, in Washington, DC.

**Alpine Hideaway**
in progress, oil, 12 x 18.
From *Dinotopia: Journey to Chandara* (to be published in the fall of 2007).

**Bilgewater**
in progress, 12 x 18, oil on board.
From *Dinotopia: Journey to Chandara* (to be published in the fall of 2007).

**Waterfall City, Afternoon Light**
2004, oil, 24 x 52.
The artist referred to plein air studies done at Niagara Falls and in Venice, Italy, to complete this painting.



ABOVE
**Severn River Hazy Day 1**
2005, watercolor, 9 x 12.
The haze in this scene creates a pink-orange color that permeates the sky and water.

OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE
**Severn River Hazy Day 2**
2005, watercolor, 7 x 10.
This scene is even hazier. It is darker and the blue of the sky is dimmer because of the large amount of water vapor in the atmosphere.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BELOW
**Severn River, Calm After the Storm**
2005, watercolor, 7 x 10.
The clearer clouds show a hint of blue in the distant sky, which is reflected in the water.

## About the Artist

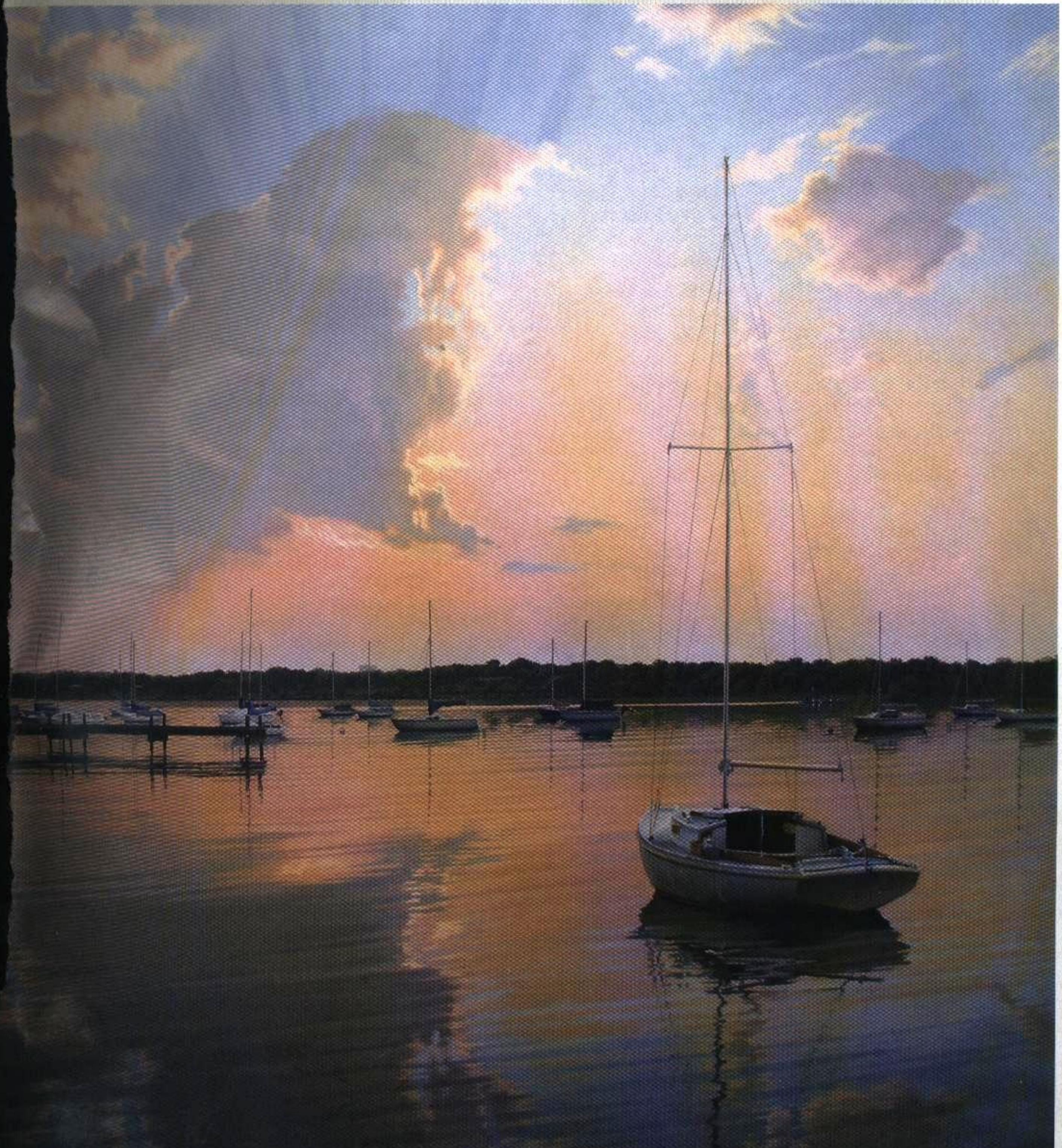
**Lee Boynton** received his B.F.A. from Syracuse University, in New York, and continued his studies at the Art Students League of New York, in Manhattan, and at the Cape Cod School of Art, in Provincetown, Massachusetts. His paintings have been selected for leading national and international exhibitions, most notably the "Arts for the Parks Top 100" exhibition, and the "Mystic International" exhibition. He is the founder of the Mid-Atlantic Plein Air Painters Association, which sponsors the annual Paint Annapolis during the fourth weekend in September, and teaches workshops in Maryland, Maine, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Florida, and Illinois. For more information on Boynton, visit his website at www.leeboynton.com.

as a way to describe a sunlit mass landscape painting. "Monet saw this as broken color; with the use of Chinese white I have found that warm and cool colors can be put together in watercolor to achieve the effect of a sunlit mass."

Continuing to describe his process of painting the light effect at Spa Creek, Boynton explains how he next painted the mass of trees. "I first ha[d] to do some investigation," he says. When I arrive[d] at the scene one early morning to paint *Spa Cree[k] Sunny Day 1*, there was warm sunlight on the trees. Overall, the trees were darker than the sky or the water, and the tree mass was painted from light to dark, or from warm sun to cool shadow.

"You must look at the tree mass as light and shadow, learning to see the color of light as a statement of the warmth of the sun against the shadow—which is best expressed with a cooler color," Boynton continues. The warmth in a

**Approaching Storm**
2005, oil, 40 x 50. Collection the artist.





1

### Step 1
McHenry first completed this 9"-x-12" plein air oil study on location.

### Step 2
Back in his Dallas studio, he referred to the oil study and photographs to carefully draw the outlines of the landscape elements he wanted to include in his painting on a 24"-x-32" oil-primed linen canvas.

### Step 3
Using fairly thin mixtures of oil color, the artist painted the cloud formation in the background. He typically works from background to foreground elements, and from the top to the bottom of a canvas.

### Step 4
McHenry then painted the distant grove of trees using oil colors thinned with Liquin alkyd medium that would speed up the drying time, thus making it easier to overlap the foreground trees.

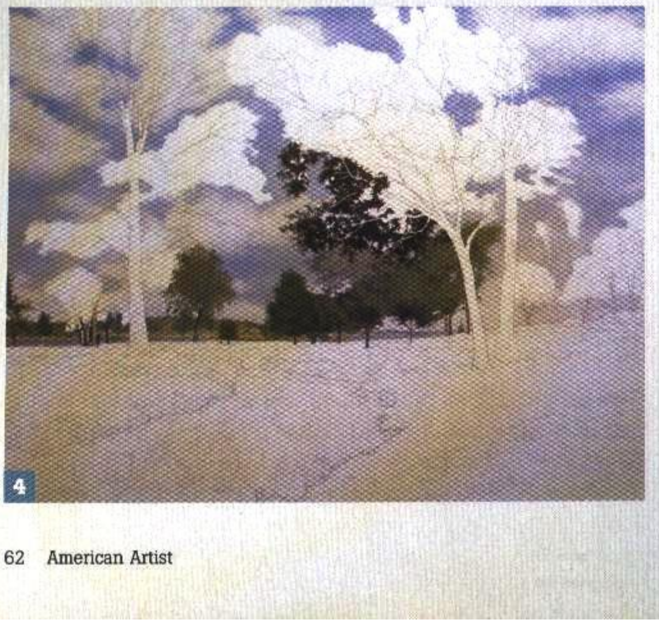
### Step 5
Because the artist works for 10 or 11 hours every day indoors, he is able to develop a greater amount of detail in his studio paintings than he can on location. You can see at this stage he is developing details in the shoreline scene.



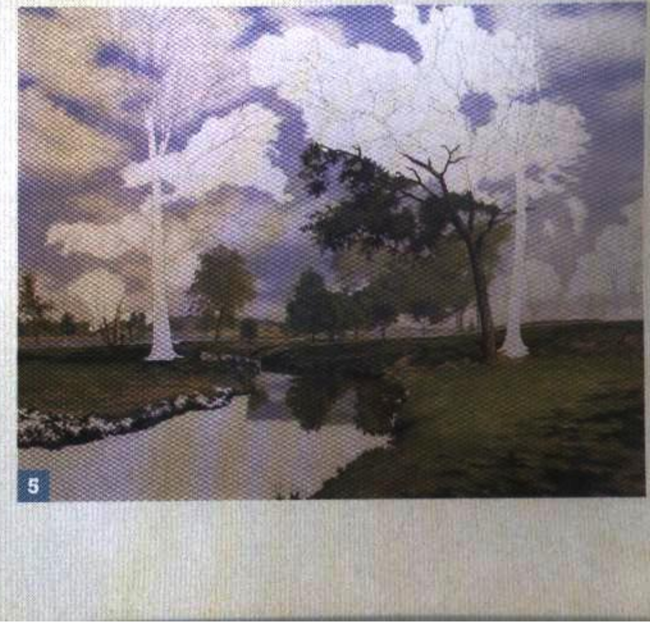
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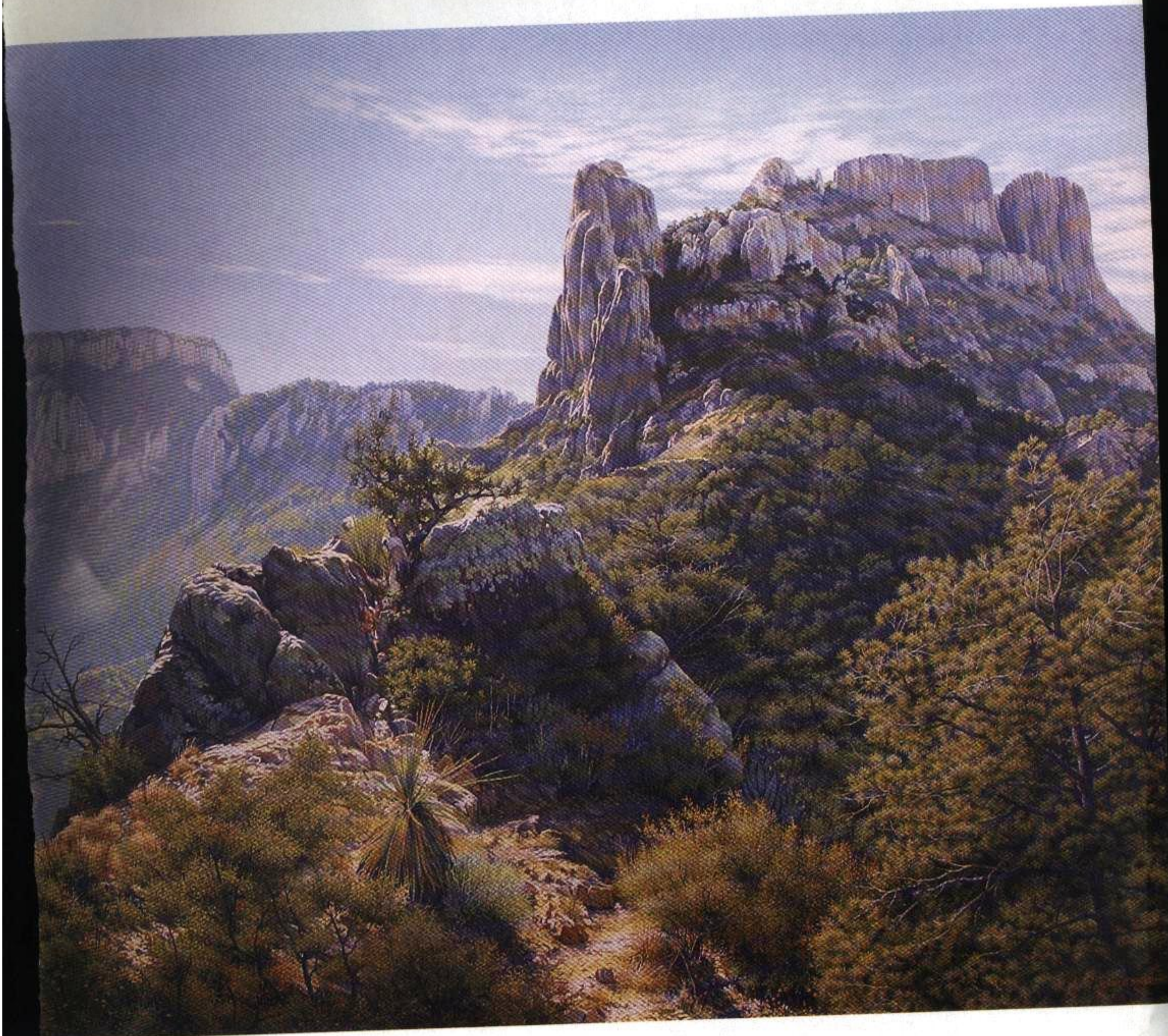
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4



5



it with a tripod mount so he would have a lighter-weight, more portable painting easel to use on location.

Always mindful of how to achieve optimum results in the least amount of time, McHenry works with thick paint on location rather than the thin glazes of color he uses in the studio. "I don't apply an initial thin wash of color on location as some artists do because I prefer to work wet-in-wet from start to finish," he explains. "I generally work from the background to the foreground, and from the top of the canvas to the bottom. That is, from the sky and distant shapes toward the larger, more sharply defined foreground elements. Working with fairly thick paint, I paint the sky and background once and often don't have to modify them later. I then make an effort to cover the rest of the white canvas with paint and later go back to resolve details. The foreground usually has the greatest amount of paint because the texture of the oils adds more contrast and structure."

In recent years McHenry has taken advantage of his computer to help evaluate the potential of a plein air sketch and the possible adjustments that might be made. "If I want to enlarge an oil sketch into a studio painting, I will often do a compositional drawing or color study to determine what changes would improve the composition; or I will scan the oil sketch into my computer and use the features of Photoshop to add or subtract trees, move mountains, change values or colors, or alter the proportions of the rectangle," he explains. "My hand is always the best tool to work with, but digital photography and computer software help me make better use of the marks my hand makes with a brush or pencil."

McHenry follows the traditional method of building up





TOP
**Paradise Rocks, Newport**
by James Suydam, 1860, oil, 25⅛ x 45⅛. Collection National Academy Museum, New York, New York.

ABOVE
**Off Ostend**
by Andreas Achenbach, 1859, oil, 49¾ x 68. Collection National Academy Museum, New York, New York.

# Luminist Horizons:
## THE ART AND COLLECTION OF JAMES A. SUYDAM

THROUGH DECEMBER 31
National Academy Museum & School of Fine Arts
New York, New York
www.nationalacademy.org
(212) 369-4880
An illustrated catalogue is available.

The first major exhibition in 25 years to explore Luminism in 19th-century American landscape painting, this show features approximately 55 paintings by James A. Suydam and the artists of his circle, including John F. Kensett, Asher B. Durand, and Frederic Edwin Church. Suydam's collection documents the many American and European influences on the artist and his peers as they explored qualities of light and atmosphere in the landscape.

# Natura Morta:
## Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections

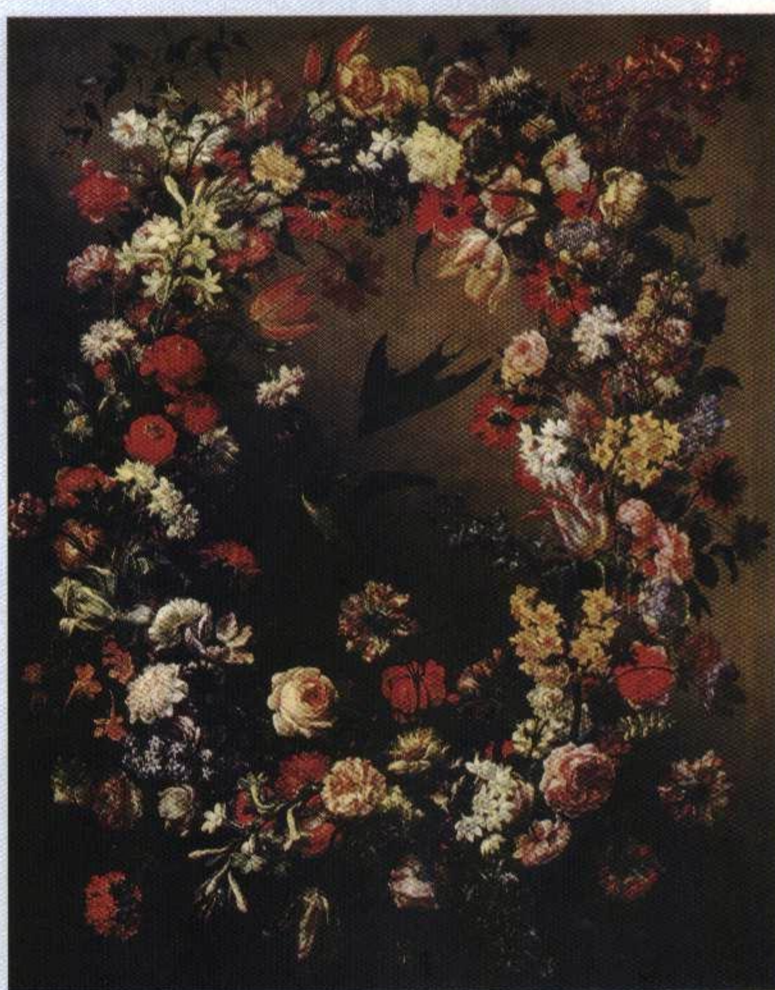
NOVEMBER 11 THROUGH JANUARY 7

Muscarelle Museum of Art
The College of William & Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia
www.wm.edu/muscarelle
(757) 221-2710

More than 40 works by painters of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, all pulled from the Medici collections, will be on display at the Muscarelle Museum of Art, in Williamsburg, Virginia, the first stop on the exhibition's national tour. The Medici family dominated Florence for 300 years, defining an era and leaving a powerful legacy that has since been associated with Europe's commercial and artistic Renaissance.

Artists featured in the exhibition include Bartolomeo Bimbi—the premier still-life painter for the Medici family—Willem van Aelst, Jan van Kessel, Giovanna Garzoni, and Bartolomeo Ligozzi. Unique to the show will be Caravaggio's *Still Life With Fruit on a Stone Ledge*, which is not part of the larger exhibition.

BELOW
**Garland With Swallows**
by Bartolomeo Bimbi, ca. 1690–1695, oil, 42 x 34. Collection Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence, Italy.





ABOVE
**Still Life With Fruit on a Stone Ledge**
by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, ca. 1603, oil, 34¼ x 53¼. Courtesy Antonius Group.



RIGHT
**Flowers, Fruit, and a Parrot**
by Bartolomeo Ligozzi, 1688, oil, 29 x 42. Collection Poggia a Caiano, Villa Medicea, Museo della Natura Morta, Florence, Italy.

BELOW
**The White Horse**
1819, oil, 51¾ x 73 15/16. Collection The Frick Collection, New York, New York.

BOTTOM
**The Lock**
1824, oil, 56 x 47½. Collection Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid, Spain.



# Constable's Great Landscapes:
## The Six-Foot Paintings



THROUGH DECEMBER 31
National Gallery of Art
Washington, DC
www.nga.gov
(202) 737-4215
An illustrated catalogue is available.

This exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, DC, reunites John Constable's six-foot landscapes with their full-size sketches for the first time since the artist's death in 1837. Eight finished six-foot paintings are paired with their corresponding full-size oil sketches, and a total of 59 works will be on display. Also included in the exhibition are oil paintings and drawings related to the large landscapes, as well as an early graphite portrait.

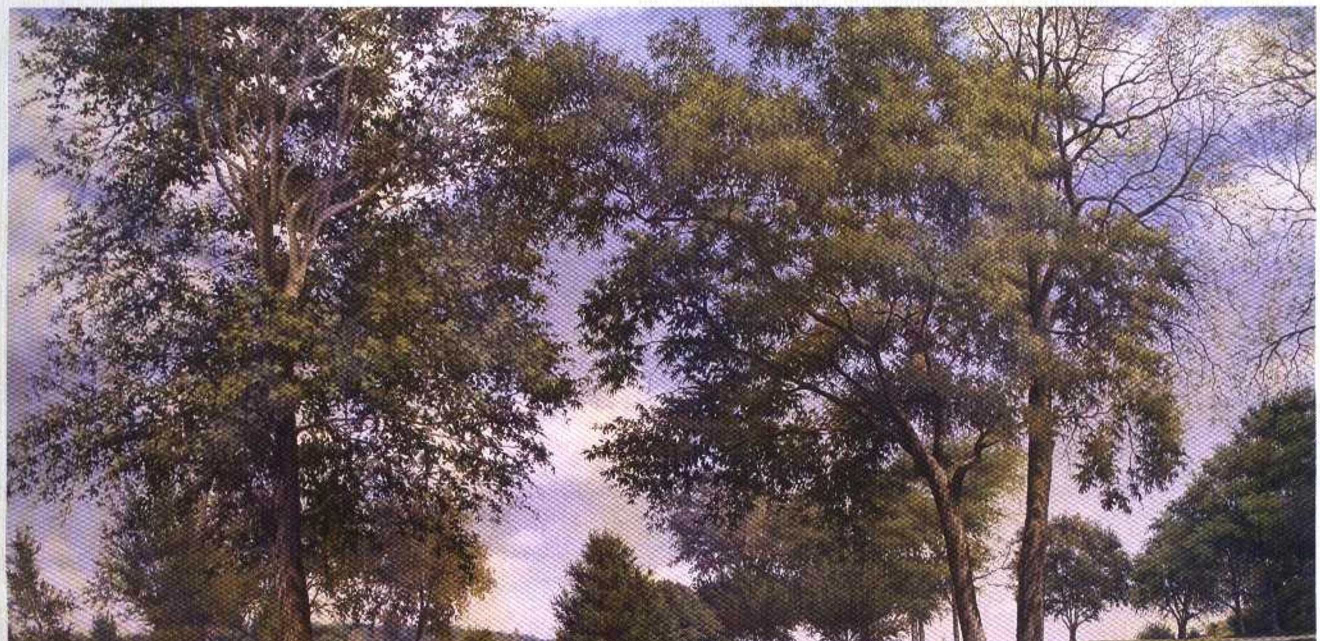


## Step 6

**After covering the entire canvas with oil color, McHenry went back into sections of the landscape to add refinements and subtle transitions of colors and values.**

THE COMPLETED PAINTING:

**April Afternoon**
2006, oil, 24 x 32.
Collection the artist.

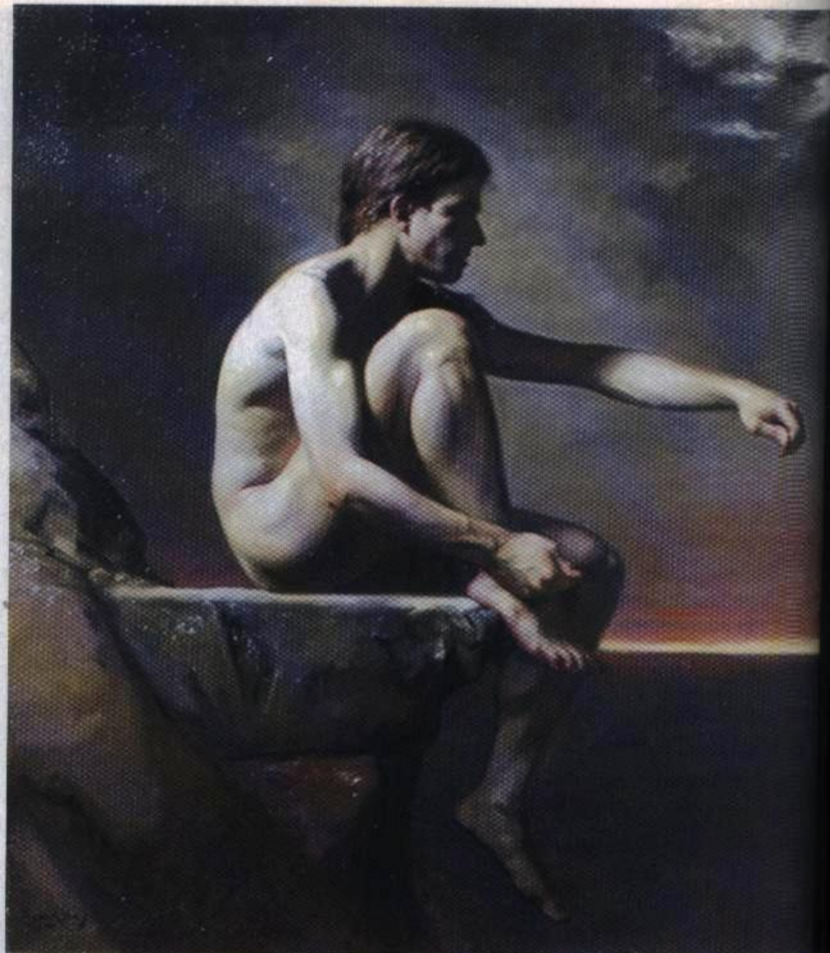




BELOW
**Study for The Gift**
2006, charcoal and white chalk, 53½ x 47½.

RIGHT
**The Gift**
2006, oil, each panel 51½ x 53½.





The purpose of the critique is to let students know if they are on course, to give them a clear indication of what we feel their strengths and weaknesses are, and to give them personalized suggestions on how to improve. They are given a pass/fail grade based on how they have done in five different categories: progress, performance, attitude, effort, and attendance.

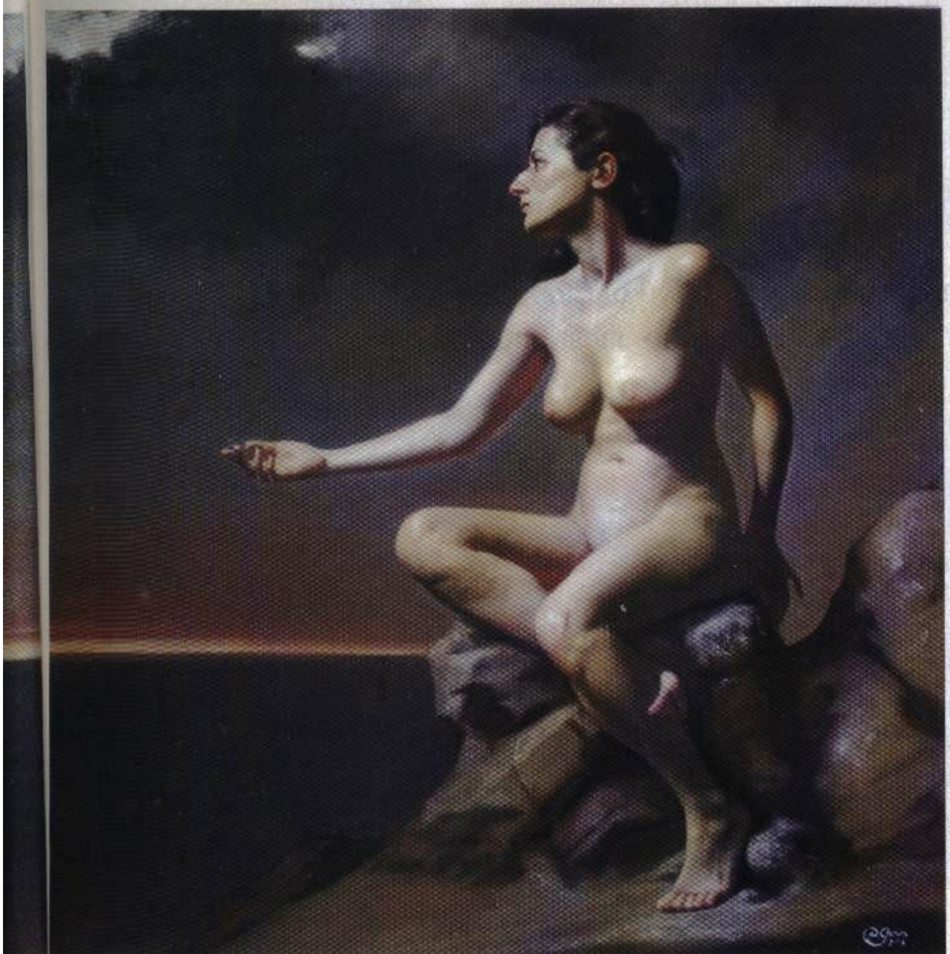
I suspect that for some students, the days sometimes seem slow and tedious, but when they leave after having been here for a few years, they know how to follow a procedure that works. Every art is about control: If you cannot follow specified movements of ballet, you cannot dance ballet; you cannot play classical music unless you have control over all the scales and your fingering. You cannot paint and sculpt in a traditional manner unless you have learned the necessary principles and techniques, such as movement, gesture, and proportion.

There are generally two types of students: those who seem to have a special gift for seeing and then translating quickly and fluidly from three dimensions into two, and those who struggle for each new skill they acquire. Both make excellent painters and sculptors, as well as excellent teachers, for different reasons. The former are often admired role models; they quickly perceive the students' mistakes and the reason they have made them. On the other hand, those who have struggled have a keen grasp of the difficulties; they serve as examples of progress and can sympathize with the frustration of those who are struggling.

What seems to be common in those who are successful, the ones who survive, is their passion and hard work. I believe anyone can achieve success, no matter what his or her level of talent, if he or she is totally passionate, involved, and assiduous. As Michelangelo said, "If people knew how hard I worked, they wouldn't like what I do."

## A Personal Statement

Although pieces of the tradition were saved and passed down, I worry about the current state of this body of knowl- edge, which is one of the reasons I have devoted part of my time over the years to teaching. When developing the program at The Florence Academy of Art, I chose to emphasize those aspects of the tradition that seemed vital to me. In doing so, it was not my desire to manipulate the tradition to fit my personal vision, but to strengthen it, build on it, and give a generation of students the tools they need to devote themselves to what I consider one of the greatest and most challenging occupations of all: the creation of images that have emotional resonance and technical skill and that, in their truthfulness and beauty, convey ideas of great significance. To this end, as I mentioned earlier, I blended what I learned from the influential artists/teachers I met during the course of my own studies. I have necessarily interpreted the



BELOW
**Study for The Gift**
2006, charcoal and white chalk, 52¼ x 50.



teachings in my own way, fitting the pieces together as seemed most right. In the spirit of passing on to students that which is "pure" or "true"—that is, to ensure that we are teaching principles and not imposing styles, mannerisms, or techniques—we focus on practicalities of craft at the school.

To learn these classical techniques of drawing, painting and sculpting, one needs to know the language so that they can "speak" in a way that will be understood. I want to pass this language on to students not so that they will then go into their studios and produce work that is an imitation of the past but so they can go into the world and create works of art in a language that has long been used by artists, and that has long been understood by people of all levels of society—be they working artists or otherwise. All that being said, I am most aware that the tradition is much greater than the sum of all the elements of craft. We are indeed standing on the shoulders of giants.

John Ruskin pointed out that we have generations of people behind us helping us to make works of art. I would add that those generations of artists have raised the technical and psychological significance of painting to such a high level that anyone taking the baton faces the toughest competition there is. "Why can't we produce Leonardos today?" one might ask. I do not believe it is only because we lack technical knowledge and expertise. I believe it is because there is something *in addition* to the technique that is also part of the tradition. I hope that by having the school in Florence, by exposing students to its great masterpieces and culture, that they will pick up more of the essence of the tradition, that they will have more than technique behind them to motivate them.

Given that we do not want to just repeat the work of past centuries, I think one of the great challenges we face is that of discovering what we are going to paint and sculpt. To merely record the surface appearance of "reality" has never been the province of painting, whose language is far deeper. From the beginning, artists have painted, sculpted, and drawn things that had meaning for them, and the images they have left behind are a living testament, a record of their consciousness on earth.

To continue the testimony of what humans have seen, believed, felt, and thought, we must have the courage to ask ourselves what we really care about, because if we do not know we cannot express it. We must develop our capacity for deep feeling, for what we know with our minds is only part of what we have to give to our art—we also have our hearts to give. Today many of us are adults in our minds but children in our hearts. We must grow wise in our hearts, in tandem with honing our craft, in order to express ourselves in a way that will both touch and be meaningful to others. To seek beauty and meaning in our lives is to bring it into our art. ■



1



2




3

### Step 1
Gould first covered the initial graphite sketch with a color-glaze underpainting, which he executed loosely and quickly with a large brush to avoid picking up the graphite.

### Step 2
The artist then blocked in the midtones in local colors, allowing the underpainting to show through as much as possible.

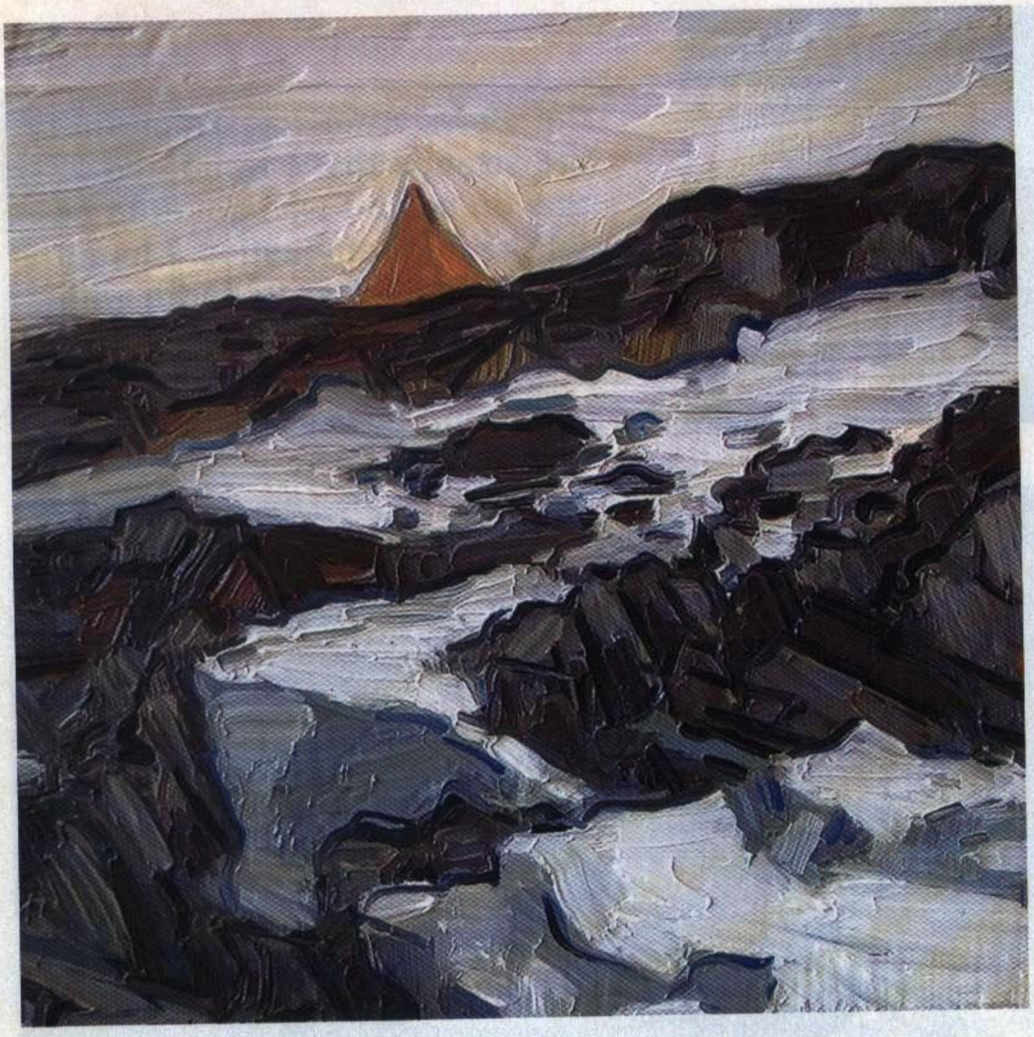
### Step 3
Using smaller brushes, the artist added final touches of texture, color, and value.

THE COMPLETED PAINTING:
**Swainson's Hawk**
2005, acrylic, 10 x 8.
Collection the artist.



"The views were so extraordinary and strange that I wondered how on earth I was going to be able to do them justice. I found that it was better to begin with some deliberately unspectacular views rather than starting with something overwhelming."





LEFT
**Tent at Old Palmer (From Shore)**
2003, oil on panel, 8 x 8. Collection Dr. Kristin Van Konynenburg.

ocean, while in the distance a group of islands and icebergs is backed by an enormous land mass covered in ice and snow. Above, the clouds have parted to reveal an icy wedge of blue sky. The place really does seem endless, frozen, and uninhabited. Forbidding as these landscapes are, Woodside says that he would love to return. "Plein air painting in Antarctica was a sublime and truly special experience for me. It was a dream come true, and I felt incredibly fortunate every moment I was there."

On most of his painting trips Woodside brings along a fairly traditional set of supplies. "I use Winsor & Newton, Rembrandt, and Gamblin paints in various colors," he reports. "For white, I use Permalba; I love its consistency." The artist paints exclusively on panels made from Masonite or Baltic birch plywood, which he prepares with Gamblin Ground. "I find this gives me by far the best surface to work on," he says. "It sands very well between coats and takes the paint wonderfully." Woodside uses a variety of brushes. "Mostly I buy cheap ones," he says, "because I'm pretty rough with them and I go through so many. For fine work I like to use the newer synthetic brushes." Woodside usually paints on a French easel that he's modified and strengthened. "For much larger and heavier panels I use an old, heavy door as an improvised easel," he says. "I stick it in the back of my station wagon, drag it out to the site where I'm painting, and lean it up against a tree or a rock. It's cumbersome and a pain but very effective."

Woodside's approach to making a painting is at once direct and intense. "I don't do an underpainting or any preliminary drawings," he says. "I start my paintings in a pretty loose, quick fashion—editing, choosing forms and details to emphasize, adjusting spatial relationships, and painting fairly thin. I'm usually drawn to a primary shape, object, or form, and that will usually be the starting point for a painting. Sometimes that form remains the dominant element in the picture, but other times different characteristics or relationships within that view—ones I hadn't been aware of at first—take over and become the focus of the painting. In a sense, I'm trying to distill what I'm looking at into something I can understand, grasp, and manage. As I continue painting and my goals and interests become clearer, the paint gets much thicker and the forms more emphatic and bold. I often continue in this fashion, working wet-in-wet, until the painting is finished."

Woodside says that he works fairly quickly and always finishes his work on-site, although sometimes he will continue




"While plein air painting I felt like I could finally *see* the paint I was using. It sounds silly, but I was just amazed at how clear and accessible the color looked. I suddenly felt like I'd been missing something all those years in the studio."

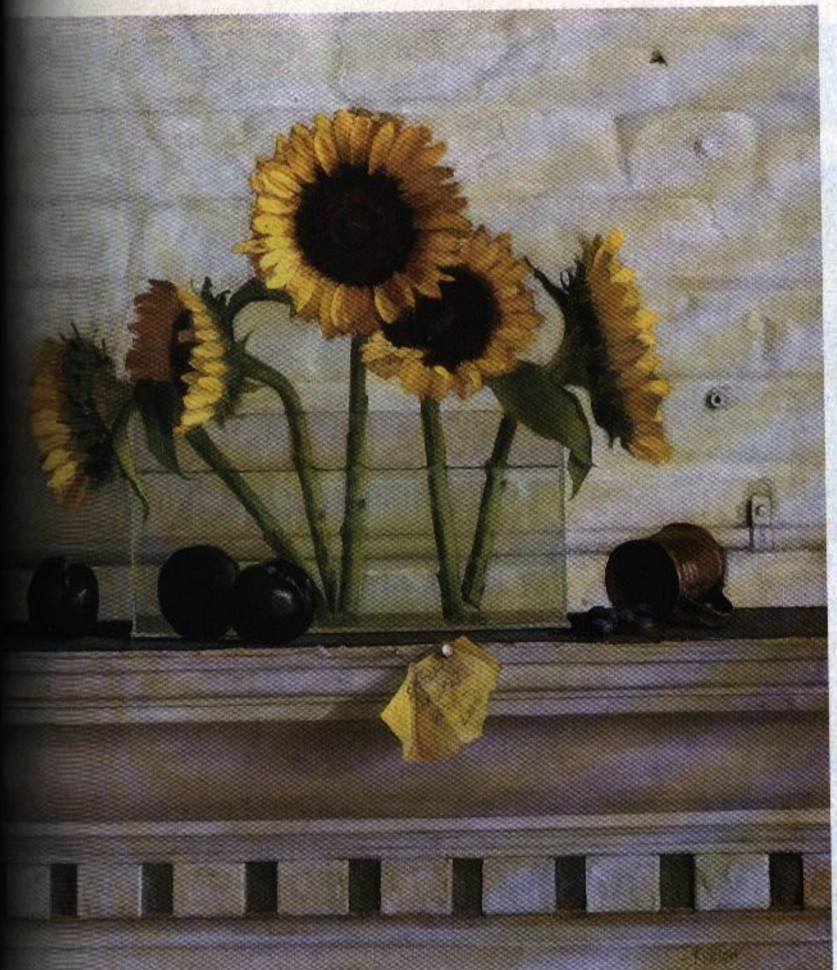


ABOVE LEFT
**Scott Tent**
2003, oil on panel, 8 x 8. Collection Robert J. Hrebek.

LEFT
**Norsel Point**
2003, oil on panel, 16 x 16. Collection John and Janet Pattillo.



**Tied Down**
2003, oil, 19 x 16. Collection the artist.



## About the Artist

**Judith Pond Kudlow** was born in Montana and studied at the College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, Virginia; and at the New York Academy of Art, the National Academy School of Fine Arts, the Art Students League of New York, and The Harlem Studio of Art, all in Manhattan. Her paintings have been exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions, including a recent four-person show at Anderson Fine Art Gallery, in St. Simons Island, Georgia. For more information on Kudlow, visit www.AndersonFineArtGallery.com.

"Whether my subject is a flower, a piece of fabric, or a model, my procedure is the same once the composition has been worked out," Kudlow explains. "One indispensable tool for determining the setup and the size and dimensions of the painting is a viewfinder. The one we use in The Harlem Studio of Art was designed by Andrea J. Smith and works beautifully.

"The next step is stretching and toning the canvas," Kudlow explains. "I use Raphaël oil-primed linen made in Italy that I usually tone with a thin wash of raw umber. If I need to begin the drawing before the tone is dry, I'll use charcoal on tracing paper and then transfer the image to the canvas. I usually spend two or three days doing a careful drawing. Ironically, the more solid the drawing, the freer I am with my brushstrokes because I'm not drawing with the paint. This runs counter to the belief that a careful drawing restricts the painter to slavishly 'coloring inside the lines.' On the contrary, it gives me the freedom to subordinate most of the drawing issues while I focus on applying the paint.

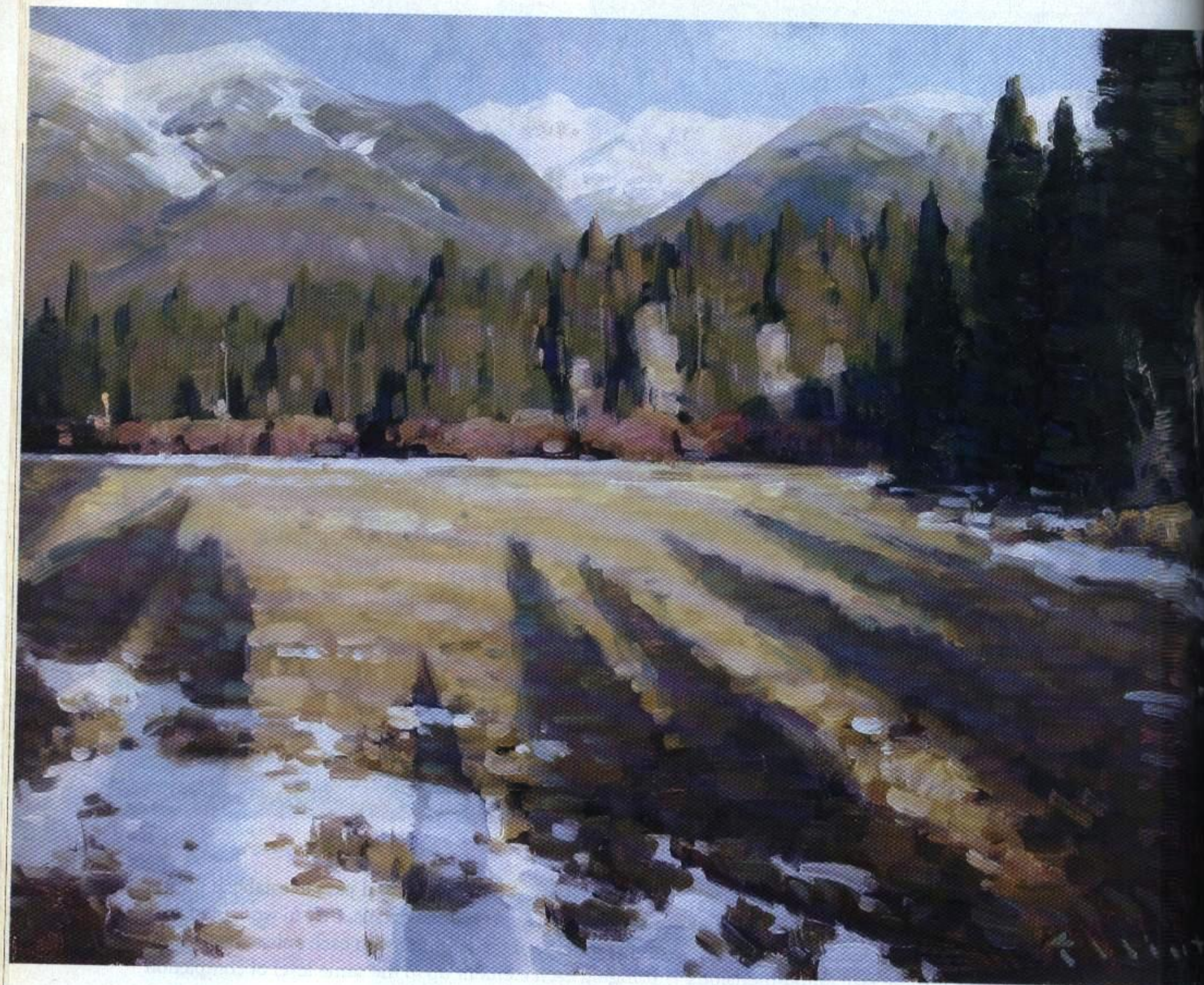
"I apply paint to the drawing in a series of 'passes.' The first pass is a coat of paint thinned with a mixture of Robert Doak & Associates balsam walnut medium and Winsor & Newton English distilled spirits. The goal is to mass in all the color and shadow shapes with accurate hues and values. When that dries, I apply a second pass to establish transitions and add a few refined details. I try to work over the entire surface of the painting with each subsequent pass, bringing each element up to the same level of completion before adding another level of complexity.

"I use a limited palette of ivory black, raw umber, alizarin crimson, cobalt blue, ultramarine blue, burnt sienna, yellow ochre, cadmium red, cadmium yellow, and white," Kudlow continues. "If I need to bring in another color to paint a vibrant hue in a necktie, for example, I always try to use the color somewhere else in the painting as well. Using a palette knife, I premix the basic colors, and I work with a different brush—predominantly flats—for each color.

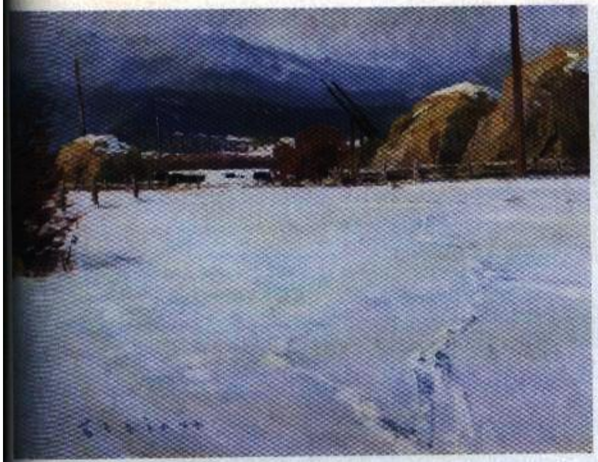
"I draw and paint using the principles of sight-size, which means simply that during the drawing phase the relationship of the subject to the drawing is one to one," Kudlow says. "As a result, the paintings convey the power of the subject when viewed from a distance.

"All of us need beauty, serenity, and pleasant surprises in our lives. My job as a painter is to capture these things and say to others, 'Look at this! Isn't it wonderful, beautiful, surprising, and calming?'" ■

*M. Stephen Doherty is the editor-in-chief of* American Artist.







@ www.myAmericanArtist.com

*To view an Online Exclusive gallery of work by Josh Elliott, visit the* American Artist *website.*

OPPOSITE PAGE
**Martinsdale Morning**
2006, oil, 20 x 20.

LEFT
**Big Hole Haystacks**
2006, oil, 9 x 12.
"I like to paint weather, like the coming snowstorm in this one," says Elliott. "It adds drama to a not-so-dramatic scene."

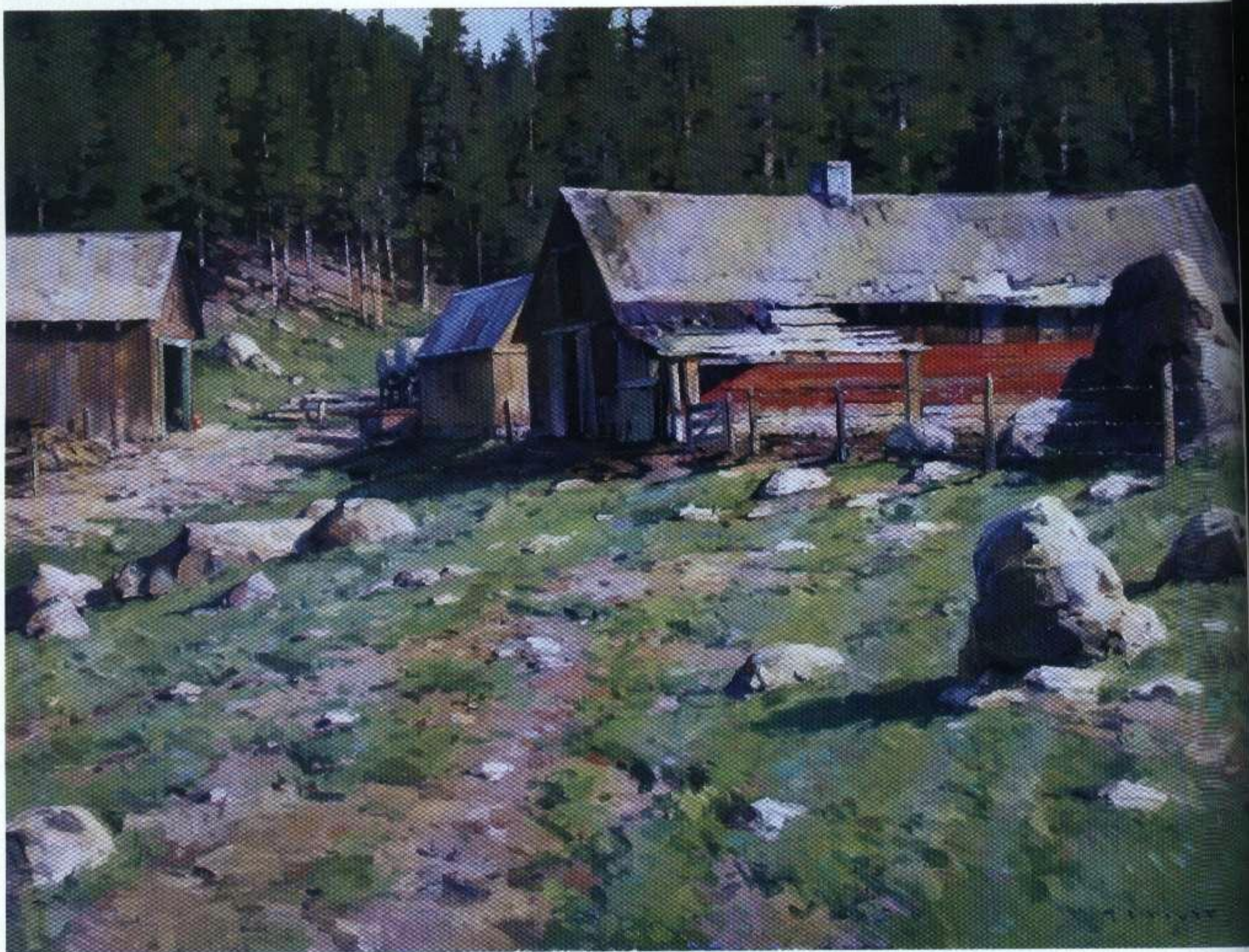
BELOW
**Ulm Ranch**
2006, oil, 15 x 30. Collection Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.
"This was mostly about painting white on white," comments Elliott. "The white barn looks yellow with the sunlight hitting it, and the snow was reflecting the sky. The artist's job is to point out what nonartists don't always see—like a yellowish barn and bluish snow."

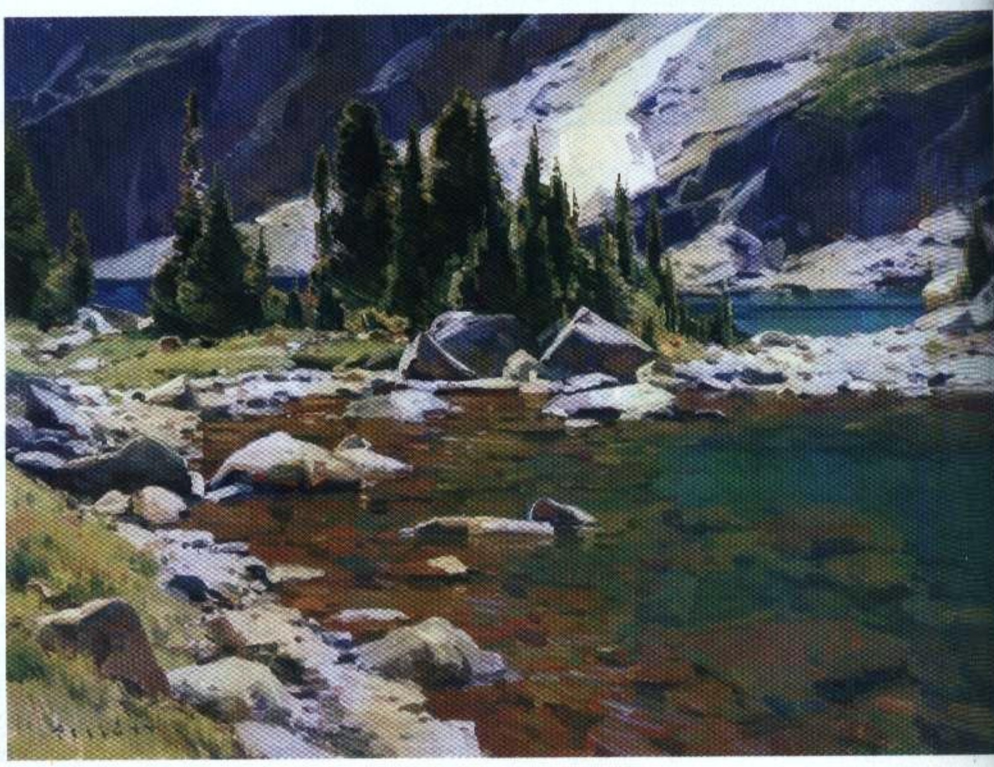


or how blue—and still make it read," says the artist. "I think of some of these new paintings as tone poems." Such paintings are inherently moody, and Elliott likes that—even as he carefully avoids dictating a specific mood. "Yesterday I painted the last light of the day—the trees looked pink, and the mountain's shadow was coming over them. It created a feeling of nostalgia...or impending doom...or still, quiet, peacefulness. It depends on the viewer's feelings about the scene, not just mine."

This exploration is indicative of Elliott's willingness to pursue change—be it in subject matter, composition, or the colors on his palette. His paintings of landscapes suggest great veracity, but the artist has no problem rearranging elements to create stronger compositions. He cites the work of Victor Higgins, Rockwell Kent, and the Group of Seven—the Canadian landscape painters Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley—as inspirational in this regard. "They were all artists who really owned their images," says Elliott. "They were not slaves to nature. It takes some courage to move things around, and it also takes awhile to know how to make it work." Thus, trees can be moved and turned orange in his paintings if the artist thinks it will improve a piece.

For years, Elliott worked with a basic palette consisting of titanium white, French ultramarine blue, cobalt blue, cadmium red, cadmium yellow light, virdian, and one surprising hue—cobalt violet. "My dad [painter Steve Elliott] had some on his palette, and I started using it instead of cadmium red," he says. "Cobalt violet is a little subtler; it warms things up, but not too much." He recently expanded his palette significantly, adding quinacridone rose, Indian red, cadmium orange, permanent green, turquoise, chromium oxide, raw umber, and yellow ochre because he wanted richer colors. "At first it looked like somebody dumped a bag of Skittles on my canvas," says Elliott, "then I reined it in and really started having fun."





**ABOVE**

**Ol' Red**

2006, oil, 30 x 40.

"When I painted the study for *Ol' Red* the rancher came out to warn me about his aggressive sheep," recalls Elliott. "Then he asked if I would paint his barn with a new roof on it. I told him that I was painting it *because* of the roof. That barn had a much more interesting character than the other two in the scene, which were newer."

**RIGHT**

**Glacier Lakes, Beartooths**

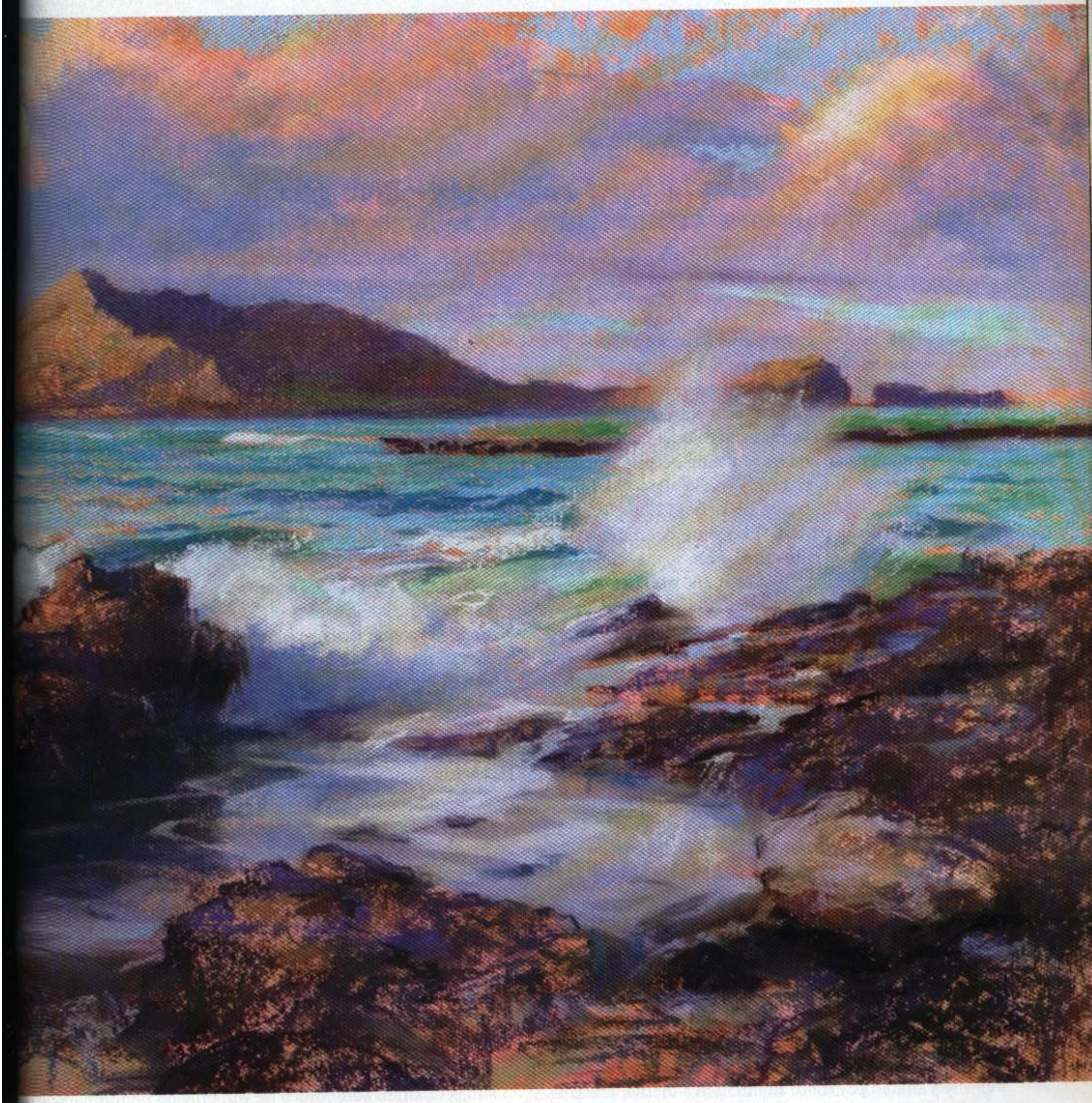
2006, oil, 18 x 24.

"This painting is an example of how you don't have to paint everything to get a sense of place," comments Elliott. "You can tell these are high mountain lakes without seeing the actual mountain peaks. If you can capture the essence of a scene with less, then go with less."

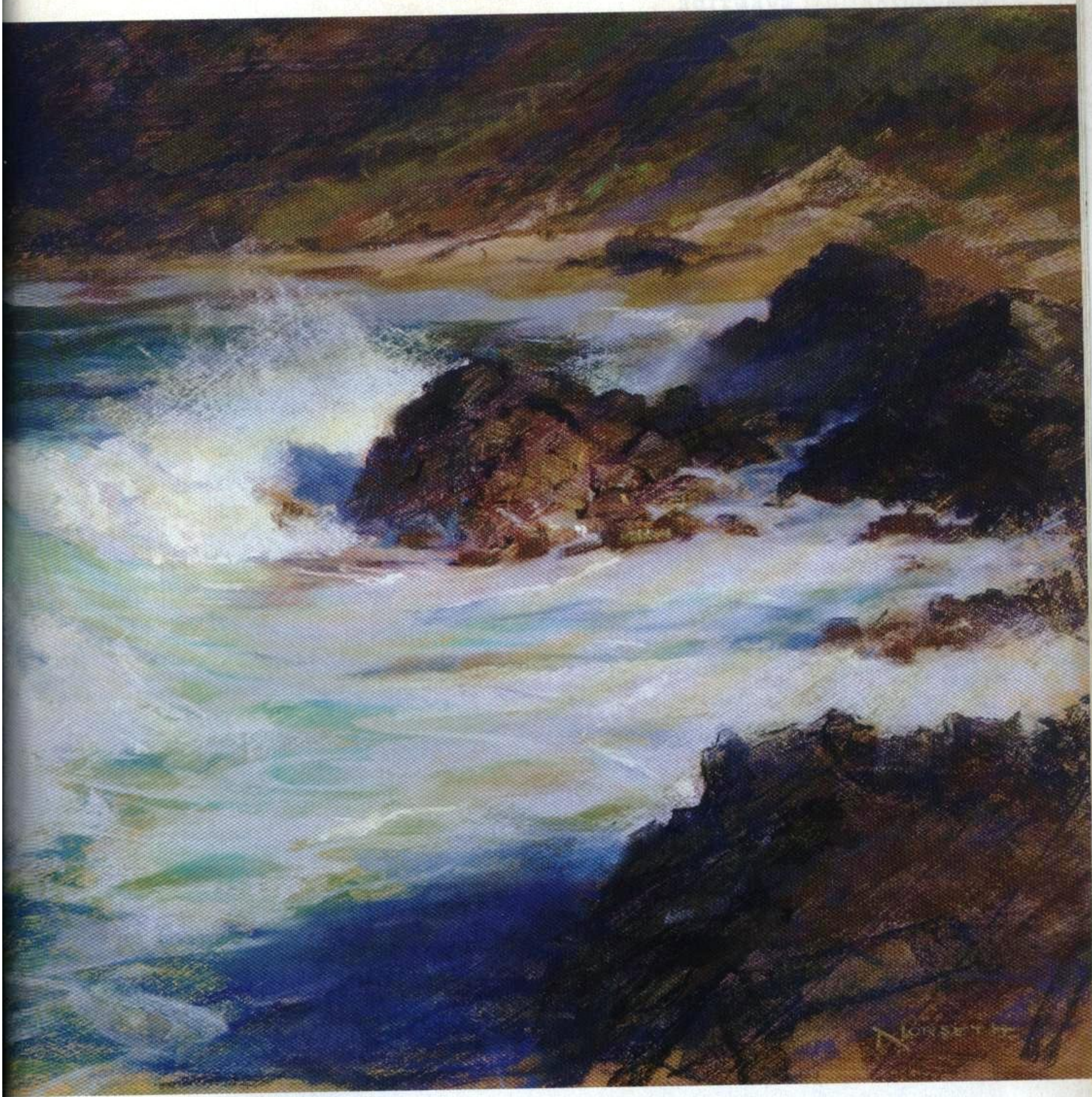
**OPPOSITE PAGE**

**Big Hole River**

2006, oil, 24 x 30.



**Rising Sea**
2005, pastel on prepared board, 18 x 24. Courtesy The Gallery at Ward Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii.



the back of the house filtering in, as well as birdsongs and the chirping of geckos. Norseth often listens to music as he works, especially pieces by Ennio Morricone, Debussy, Grieg, or Ferde Grofé. Particularly evocative of the sea, according to Norseth, is the adagio section from Rachmaninoff's *Second Symphony*. "I hear bits of it in my head when I'm working outside," the artist says.

Norseth's plein air work usually begins along Oahu's Naiwi coast, where he finds spectacular lava cliffs and outcroppings. He may spend two minutes—or an hour—looking for the right subject. "Sometimes," he says, "I step out of the car and happen upon an instant composition." He then explores, hunting for angles and movements that attract him, noting his response to what he sees, using a viewfinder to make quick graphite thumbnail sketches, and jotting notes. Then he leaves the location to contemplate and synthesize what he saw.

The artist's next step is to execute more thumbnail sketches from memory, laying down the salient features of the landscape. These sketches may not match reality, but they reflect his impressions. He then creates a more complete



### Step 1

Norseth began this painting by blocking in the main shapes with hard pastels, being conscious of the pattern of light and dark values. "Because everything was in motion, I was very selective about what I included, and I chose shapes that would contribute to the overall harmony of the piece," the artist explains.



### Step 2

The artist then blocked in a wave in the middle of the picture, leaving it loosely defined so he could develop it more carefully once back in his studio. He refined the other shapes in the picture, still using the hard Nupastels to avoid clogging the surface of the paper with too much pigment.



### Step 3

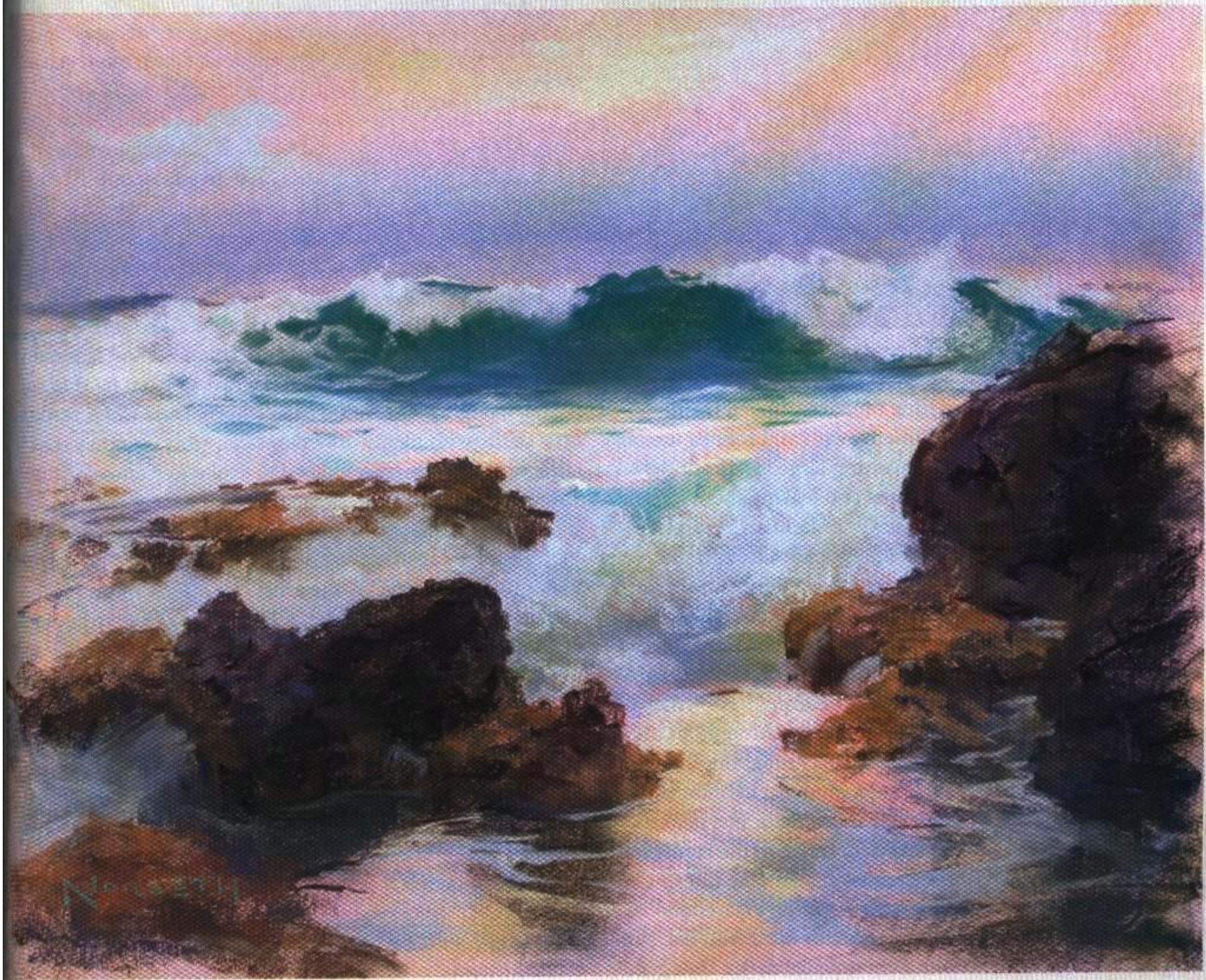
Back in his studio, Norseth continued to refine the painting using the information noted on location and his memory of the scene. "I addressed the overall lighting effects and the beautiful lavender-blue shadows that created a backdrop for the waves," he explains. "I kept the waves low in key by adding lavender-gray tones and allowing the undertone of the surface to work its way through."

THE COMPLETED PAINTING, BELOW:

**Eventide**

2006, pastel on prepared paper, 16 x 20. Collection the artist.

This painting received the First Place, Award of Excellence prize at the Third Annual Pastel Artists of Hawaii exhibition in 2006.















### Reference Photo

The photograph of the still-life arrangement Hansen painted.

### Step 1

Working directly from his still-life setup, the artist first drew the shapes of the objects and flowers with a thin mixture of cobalt blue.

### Step 2

Hansen worked all over the canvas as he blocked in the shapes of the plants and dishes.

### Step 3

He then strengthened the dark shadows and bright highlights to add a greater sense of dimension to the objects.

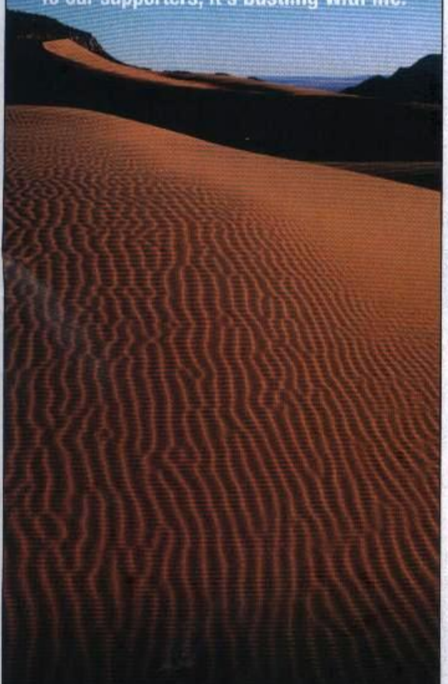


THE COMPLETED PAINTING:
**Peony Blossoms**
2006, oil, 16 x 20.
Collection the artist.







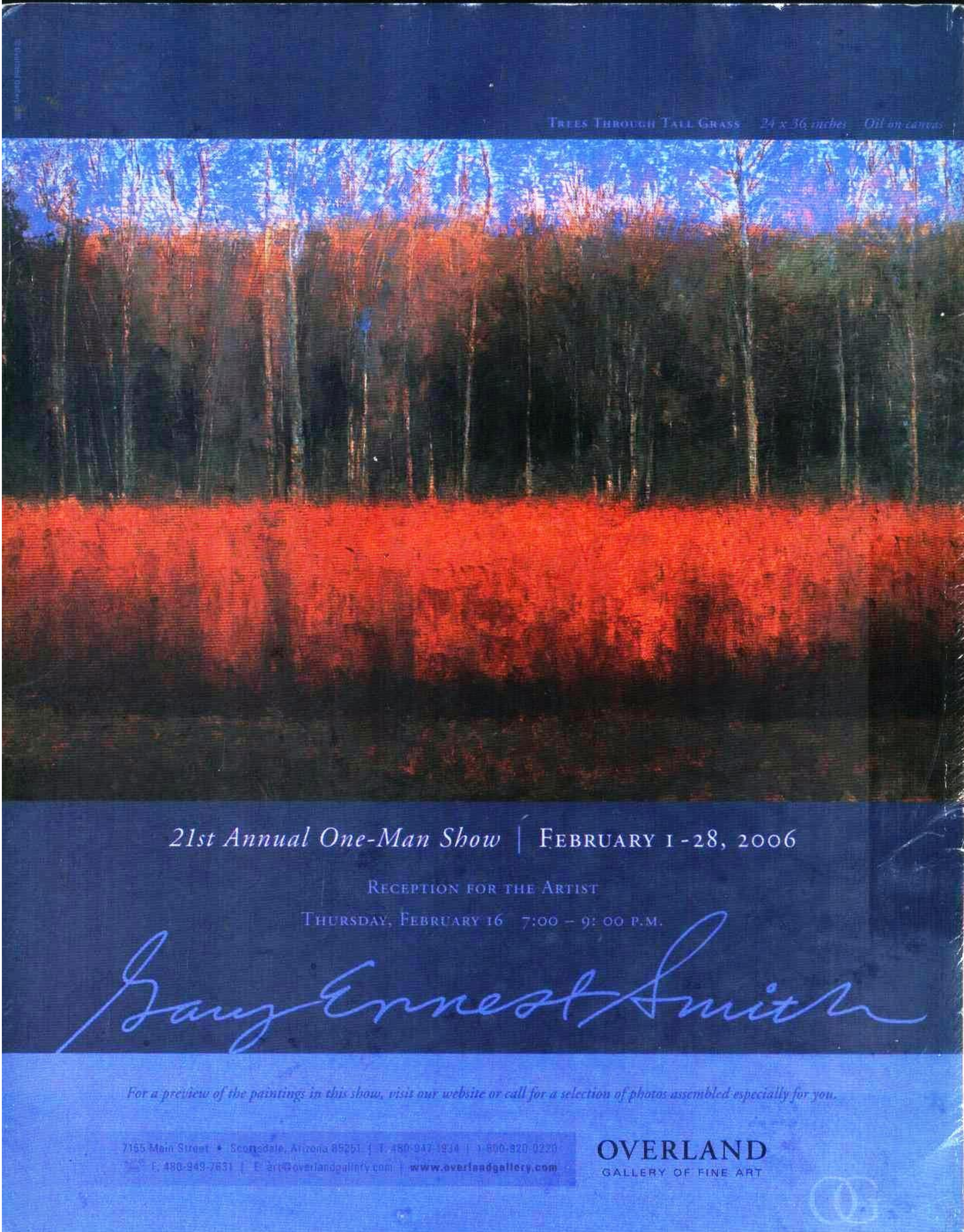




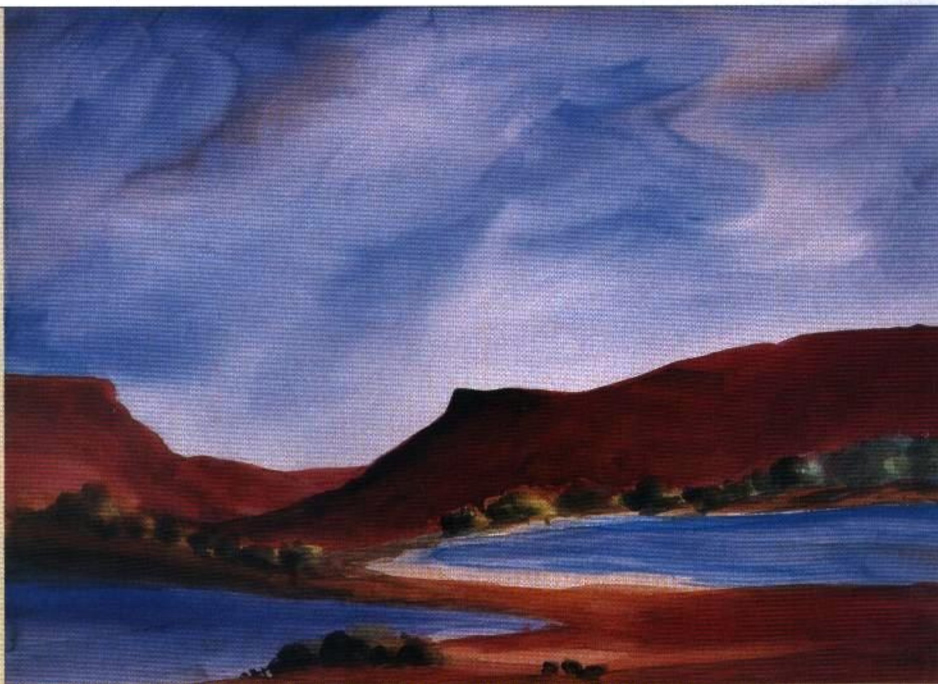




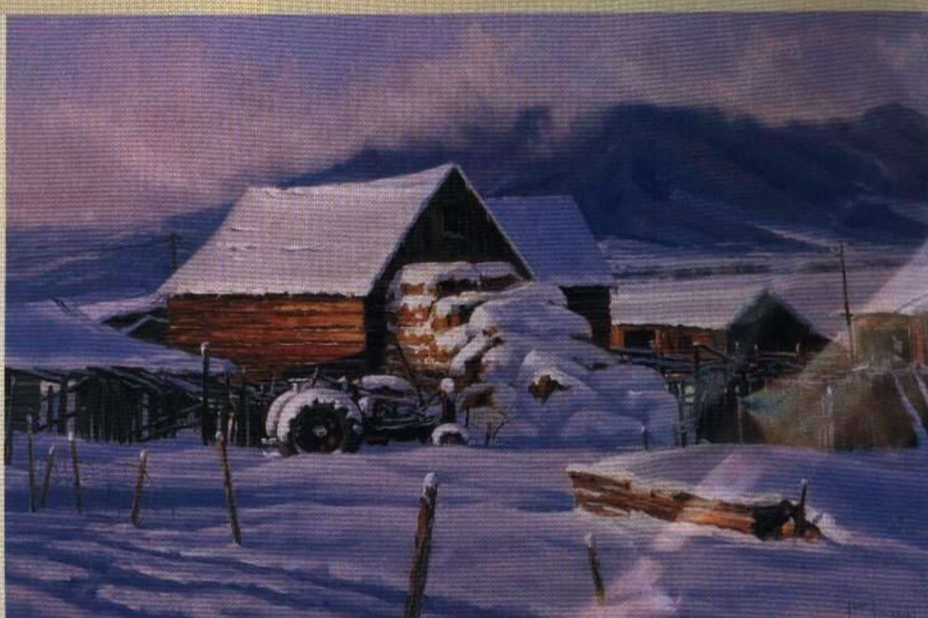




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# THE WILD & *Wonderful* LANDSCAPE





Poet Joyce Kilmer once wrote, "I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree." Indeed, words sometimes fail amid the beauty and wonder of nature. But where poets may falter, painters often succeed. They bring us visual rhapsodies on mountains, valleys, forests, and oceans. With sweeps of a brush, they can convey all the colors, emotions, and designs reflected in nature's handiwork. This month, we celebrate these artists in our annual landscape issue. We thank them for taking us into the wild to see the loveliness of a tree without uttering a single word.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
JAMES COOK, WEST WIND—OCTOBER, RED & GOLD, OIL, 85 X 79.
TOM LOCKHART, FEBRUARY SNOW, OIL, 24 X 36.
ELAINE HOLIEN, GHOST RANCH MESA, WATERCOLOR, 22 X 30.



# IMMERSED IN THE Land

